# THINKING THROUGH THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS WITH HANNAH ARENDT

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This dissertation offers a philosophical analysis of the ecological crisis through the lens of Hannah Arendt. It frames the ecological crisis as a struggle for situated cohabitation. By analyzing the work of Arendt, this dissertation shows the ways in which the ecological crisis is entwined with the political crisis of plurality. I suggest that these two issues are interconnected and that we need to address both for situated cohabitation. This dissertation is an interdisciplinary work, drawing from environmental philosophy, feminist philosophy, and educational practice. The work is intended to provide novel insight into the current ecological crisis in three ways. First, it grounds its theory in the work of Arendt, a thinker not usually situated in the prevue of environmental scholarship. Second, by synthesizing Arendt's account of plurality with the work of Judith Butler and Ricardo Rozzi, this dissertation explores a politics of plurality that can take account of social and ecological conditions of plurality. Third and finally, the dissertation merges theory with praxis by offering a practical program for doing environmental philosophy with children, a program derived from my sustained experiences working as a facilitator of a philosophy for children (P4C) program. This dissertation does not seek just a theoretical understanding of the ecological crisis, but also a practice of situated cohabitation in the crisis.

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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Dissertation Overview

This dissertation offers a philosophical analysis of the ecological crisis through the lens of the great political thinker, Hannah Arendt. It frames the ecological crisis as a struggle for situated cohabitation. By anchoring down in the work of Arendt, this dissertation shows the ways in which the ecological crisis is entwined with the political crisis of plurality. I suggest that these two issues are interconnected and that we need to address both for situated cohabitation.

This dissertation is an interdisciplinary work, drawing from environmental philosophy, feminist philosophy, and educational practice. The work is intended to provide novel insight into the current ecological crisis in three ways. First, it grounds its theory in the work of Arendt, a thinker not usually situated in the prevue of environmental scholarship. Second, by grounding in Arendt's account of plurality, this dissertation explores a politics of plurality that can take account of the other-than human world. Third and finally, the dissertation merges theory with praxis by offering a practical program for doing environmental philosophy with children, a program derived from my sustained experiences working as a facilitator of a philosophy for children (P4C) program. This dissertation does not seek just a theoretical understanding of the ecological crisis, but also a practice of situated cohabitation in the crisis.

## 1.2 Leaving the Earth

**"**I love having visitors!" exclaims a personified illustration of Mars on a NASA educational website for children.[1] Regardless of whether Mars actually wants to have visitors, we can at least recognize NASA's intention of encouraging children to be interested in and

[1] "Space Place: Explore Earth and Space!" NASA, accessed December 22, 2018, https://spaceplace.nasa.gov/all-about-mars/en/.

possibly educated about Mars and other planets' exploration. This idea of leaving the earth may no longer be a matter of dream-like science-fiction. For example, the SpaceX corporation announced its intention to build a spaceship capable of taking colonists to Mars as early as 2024.[2] SpaceX's founder, Elon Musk, has suggested that colonization of Mars will be necessary in case the earth ever becomes uninhabitable.[3] Likewise, movies like *Interstellar* (2014) increasingly promote the narrative that humanity must find another earthly planet, because we are at risk due to increasingly uninhabitable conditions of the earth.

I recall a conversation I had with one of the children who was a student at a field environmental philosophy school in Massachusetts on our way back from a gorgeous hike. The boy expressed his serious concern about overpopulation. He suggested, with sincerity but not excitement, that we need to colonize other planets for the expansion of human habitats, since the earth is getting crowded. This conversation struck me as important and encouraged me to philosophically engage with the significance of it. What does it mean for a child to say that space colonization is a key for the future in the midst of ecological crisis? This is one of the starting points for my journey in this dissertation.

Hannah Arendt begins her book *The Human Condition* (1958) by reflecting on the event of the first launch of the Russian satellite *Sputnik*, "an earth-born object" into outer space in 1957.[4] According to Arendt, the event, which was "second in importance to no other, not even to

[2] Kenneth Chang, "Elon Musk's Plan: Get Humans to Mars, and Beyond," *New York Times*, September 27, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/28/science/elon-musk-spacex-mars-exploration.html.

[3] Ian Stoner, "Human Should Not Colonize Mars," *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* 3, no. 3 (2017): 339. See also Kelsey Piper, "The Case Against Colonizing Space to Save Humanity," Vox, October 22, 2018, https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2018/10/22/17991736/jeff-bezos-elon-musk-colonizing-mars-moon-space-blue-origin-spacex.

[4] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 1958, 2nd ed., with an introduction by Margaret Canovan (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 1.

the splitting of the atom,"[5] was called by an American reporter a "step toward escape from men's imprisonment to the earth."[6] Arendt says that although the reporter's statement might have seemed banal, we should not "overlook how extraordinary in fact it was."[7] For Arendt, the American reporter's comment symbolizes the contradictory understanding of the human conditions in modernity in which we act as if we are like "dwellers of the universe," even though we are always already "earth-bound creatures."[8] Although the child with whom I had the conversation was not excited like the American reporter Arendt describes, I also consider that the child's thought should not be disregarded. It is possible that the conversation could simply be a product of the space-exploration era sixty years after *Sputnik*; however, I could not forget the sincerity of the child stating his concerns. Arendt's thought may help us to see how this willful detachment from the earth is linked with the ecological crisis.

Thus, in this dissertation, I question the meaning of living with others in the time of ecological crisis. I primarily converse with Arendt, a scholar who put plurality at the very heart of her political theory. However, because Arendt's analysis alone is not sufficient for a full ecological and pluralist critique of contemporary society, this dissertation will also synthesize Arendt's theory with the work of Judith Butler and Ricardo Rozzi, who add sociopolitical and ecological dimensions to our analysis of situated cohabitation.

## 1.3 Ecological Crisis

As we enter the third decade of the twenty-first century, questions of environmental sustainability are increasingly urgent. Environmental issues, such as climate change, rapid

[5] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 1.

[6] Ibid., p. 1.

[7] Ibid., p. 2.

[8] Ibid., p. 3.

degradation of biodiversity,[9] and the loss of habitats,[10] are a threat to earthly life. According to the 2018 report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), anthropogenic global warming will cause an increase in drought, heatwaves, and loss of biodiversity, even if global warming is limited to a 1.5 °C increase above pre-industrial times.[11] To choose just one example, warm-water coral reefs are vital habitats and sustenance for many coinhabitants, including human populations.[12] The IPCC report says that "even achieving emissions reduction targets consistent with the ambitious goal of 1.5 °C of global warming under the Paris Agreement will result in the further loss of 70–90% of reef-building corals compared to today, with 99% of corals being lost under warming of 2 °C or more above the pre-industrial period . . . ."[13] Similarly dire prognoses are on offer for many other ecosystems. This is a crisis of the conditions of earthly life—the destruction of many ecosystems and the loss of species are irreversible. The term ecology is derived from the ancient Greek word *oikos*, which has a meaning of home in English. In this sense, this is an ecological crisis, because our shared home—the conditions of earthly life, is at risk.

[9] According to the 2019 report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), 1 million species (including both animal and plant) are facing extinction due to human-driven causes within decades, unless such course of actions will be altered significantly. See IPBES, *Summary for Policymakers of the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*, eds. Sandra Díaz et al. (Bonn, Germany: IPBES secretariat, 2019), pp. 11–12.

[10] For example, the Global Wetland Outlook report by the Rasmar Convention (2018) reports that the loss of wetlands recorded 35 % since 1970, which rate is three time more than the loss of forests. See Rasmar Convention on Wetlands, *Global Wetland Outlook: State of the World's Wetlands and Their Services to People* (Gland, Switzerland: Ramsar Convention Secretariat, 2018), pp. 2, 5, 19. The report is available at: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b256c78e17ba335ea89fe1f/t/5b9ffd2e0e2e7277f629eb8f/1537211739585/RAMSAR+GWO_ENGLISH_WEB.pdf.

[11] Ove Hoegh-Guldberg et al., "Impacts of 1.5ºC Global Warming on Natural and Human Systems," in *Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the Impacts of Global Warming of 1.5°C above Pre-Industrial Levels and Related Global Greenhouse Gas Emission Pathways, in the Context of Strengthening the Global Response to the Threat of Climate Change*, *Sustainable Development, and Efforts to Eradicate Poverty*, eds. Valérie Masson-Delmotte et al. In Press. (2018).

[12] IPBES, "Summary for Policymakers of the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services," p. 11.

[13] Hoegh-Guldberg et al., "Impacts of 1.5ºC Global Warming on Natural and Human Systems," p. 229.

This ecological crisis, in which humans are making our only home uninhabitable for many species, has been highlighted with a newly coined geological term, the Anthropocene.[14] The Anthropocene signifies that human activities have become the dominant force for the course of nature, or in more direct language, that there is "a single species in charge of the planet, altering its features almost at will."[15] However, although these drastic impacts are both directly and indirectly caused by anthropogenic drivers, it is highly questionable whether these changes are precisely at "our" will. Whose will? Do we really understand what we are doing? After all, the global wealthy are responsible for the vast majority of the destructive impacts precipitating the ecological crisis. Our situation is not the work of some abstract "*anthropos*," but rather a specific cultural or way of being in the world, a way that Arendt does so much to describe and critique.

What does it mean to make our planet less and less habitable for many species (including us) which are earth-bound creatures, like Arendt describes? This dissertation explores these questions through conversing with Arendt, who perceives "crisis" as a critical moment of judgment.[16]

## 1.4 The Summary of Chapters

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. In Chapter 2, I discuss how Arendt's theory is relevant for the analysis of ecological crisis. I first review the debate of anthropocentrism in environmental ethics. I outline some issues arising from such debate,

[14] Paul J. Crutzen, "Geology of Mankind," *Nature* 415, no. 23 (2002): 23.

[15] Fred Pearce, *With Speed and Violence: Why Scientists Fear Tipping Points in Climate Change* (Boston: Bacon Press, 2007), p. 58.

[16] Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, with an introduction by Jerome Kohn (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), p. 171. In Chapter 2, I will discuss more in detail on how Arendt perceives crisis.

clarifying how Arendt can contribute to environmental philosophical discussions despite of her anthropocentrism. I lastly review existing literature of environmental scholarship that primarily uses Arendt's theory to show where this dissertation is situated and what it can offer to the scholarly field.

Then, in Chapter 3, I primarily examine Arendt's book *The Human Condition* (1958), in order to clarify how her political theory contributes to the dissertation. In particular, I review her analysis of the *vita activa,* her critique of modernity, and her analysis of earth alienation and world alienation. Through this analysis, I show Arendt's account of human plurality, which necessitates both earthly and worldly living. I argue that the link between earth and world alienation is vital to understanding and addressing the ecological crisis.

In Chapter 4, I aim to expand the ecological reading of Arendt through the work of Judith Butler and Ricardo Rozzi, in order to address the social and ecological conditions of plurality. I first introduce Butler's critique of Arendt, through which Butler develops the conditions of precariousness and interdependency as fundamental political concerns, as we are embodied beings. In conversation with Arendt's concept of the crime against humanity, Butler proposes the ethics of unchosen cohabitation, which signifies that our human plurality mandates us to not choose whom to cohabit in the earth. I then add Rozzi's analysis of biocultural ethics, which shows the interconnected link among habits, habitats, and co-inhabitants. I use Rozzi's biocultural framework to argue why the world phenomenon of rapid extinction of species and loss of biocultural diversity (including linguistic diversity) can be understood as not only a crime against humanity, but also a crime against the earth, if we can come to understand that earthly inhabitance comes with the condition of innumerous interdependency. Through examining examples of ecocide, I show the important links between crimes against humanity and crimes

against the earth, and attempt to show the importance of considering crimes against the earth in themselves.

In Chapter 5, I introduce an educational practice of situated cohabitation. I first briefly discuss how education and children are relevant to the question of situated cohabitation through conversing with Arendt. The main part of the chapter was previously published as a book chapter in the book *Growing Up With Philosophy Camp* (2020), and the book chapter was cowritten with Benn Johnson.[17] In the chapter, Johnson and I introduce an Environmental Philosophy with Children (EPWC) summer camp, which was co-developed with the other chapters of this dissertation in mind. Pulling away from direct analysis of texts, this chapter argues from firsthand accounts at the EPWC camp that cultivating a sense of plurality in community should be inseparable from cultivating a sense of place, in order to bring about a *caring* situated cohabitation.

In my conversations with Arendt and other scholars, I have learned more about how to care for our common world. In this dissertation, I hope to show that the care for the world needs to come with the care for the earth. Although the ecological readings of Arendt are still rare, I hope that this dissertation can be a helpful bridge between the scholarship of Arendt and that of the ecological crisis.

[17] Rika Tsuji and Benn Johnson, "Philosophy Meets Place: Creating an Environmental Philosophy Summer Camp," in *Growing Up with Philosophy Camp: How Learning to Think Develops Friendship, Community, and a Sense of Self*, ed. Claire Elise Katz (Blue Ridge Summit: Rowman & Little Field Publishers, 2020), chap. 7.

# CHAPTER 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Why Hannah Arendt?

Almost a half century after her death, the works of Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) have not lost their relevance.[18] This may be because we still live in difficult times; crises, as Arendt describes them, are important turning points in which people need to make a judgment.[19] Arendt understands the word *crisis* as in the Greek word *krinein*, which includes the meaning of "to decide."[20] A crisis is not simply any decision-making but is a moment where one faces the possibility of disaster without a right judgment. Arendt, thus, does not frame "crisis" as a desperate condition. She rather sees it as an opportunity, which "forces us back to the questions themselves and requires from us either new or old answers, but in any case direct judgments."[21] Arguably, much of her work is comprised of her engagements with crises of her time, or "dark times" as she describes them.[22] Some of the crises she discusses certainly remain in our time. Among those, the crises of world and earth alienation are a concern of this dissertation. I argue that the link between earth and world alienation is vital in understanding and addressing the ecological crisis. This dissertation is situated within the broader discourse of critical environmental scholarship, and it attempts to examine the ecological crisis through philosophical

[18] See, for instance, Richard J. Bernstein, *Why Read Hannah Arendt Now?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018).

[19] Jerome Kohn, Introduction to *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, by Hannah Arendt (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), p. xviii

[20] Daivd L. Marshall, "The Origin and Character of Hannah Arendt's Theory of Judgment," *Political Theory* 38, no. 3 (2010): 370; Jakob Norberg, "Arendt in Crisis: Political Thought in Between Past and Future," *College Literature* 38, no. 1 (2011): 140.

[21] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 171.

[22] Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), pp. vii–x.

analysis in conversation with and against Arendt.[23]

Before we examine her analysis of earth and world alienation in Chapter 3, it is important to discuss how Arendt's work can be relevant to the analysis of ecological crisis. After all, at first glance, it would appear that Arendt is not a part of critical environmental scholarship. Most of her work concerns the sustenance of our human world rather than the natural environment and emphasizes the differences rather than similarities between human and nonhuman animals.[24] Because of this binary between humans and nature, some scholars may consider her work as insufficient to use for scholarly work on environmental issues. However, Bonnie Honig offers two different scholarly approaches that she has observed in the feminist's analysis of Arendt's work, categorizing "Woman Question in Arendt" and "Arendt Question in Feminism."[25] Although her examples are specifically about feminist theory, her analogies are helpful for us to understand the case of environmental literature as well. Honig explains that the former, "Women Question in Arendt," is an approach that aims to examine how Arendt understands *women* in her theory and "sets a standard that Arendt can only pass or fail."[26] The former, thus, seems to test whether Arendt is feminist *enough* or not, as in similar questions about whether Plato is a feminist or not.[27] On the other hand, Honig points out that the latter examines what Arendt's theory, if any, can offer to feminist theory; that is, feminist theory itself meets the work of

[23] I particularly withdrawn of the reading of Arendt "with and against" from Bonnie Honig: Bonnie Honig, "Introduction: The Arendt Question in Feminism," in *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt*, ed. Bonnie Honig (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), pp. 2–4.

[24] I discuss this more in Chapter 3, but her project in *The Human Condition* primarily concerns how the Western political theories have undermined our condition of worldly existence. Her understanding of the human condition relies on the boundaries of different realms, such as the earth and world, and our binding activities in each realm, such as labor, work, and action.

[25] Honig, "Introduction," p. 3.

[26] Ibid.

[27] See, for instance, Lynda Lange, "The Function of Equal Representation in Plato's *Republic*," in *The Sexism of Social and Political Theory: Women and Reduction from Plato and Nietzsche*, eds. Lorenne M.G. Clark and Lynda Lange, 3–15 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979).

Arendt for further critical perspectives, including critical examination of feminist theory itself. This second approach does not, of course, mean blind acceptance, but it does mean open-mindedness or, as Arendt might say with her focus on *natality*, an openness to new beginnings.

Likewise, although Arendt does not address environmental destruction or the ecological crisis as an environmental scholar, her work, such as *The Human Condition*, examines the ways in which we engage in our world and the earth through our activities, the *vita activa*, and arguably offers critical insight into the ecological crisis. We can use Honig's second approach not only for considering Arendt and feminism, but also Arendt's possible contributions to environmental philosophy. Moreover, as seen in Judith Butler's attempt to explore more inclusive political theory through the work of Arendt, a critical reading of Arendt can offer important insights into the question of how we can live *together* in these difficult times.[28] Thus, my attempt is not so much to prove whether Arendt is an environmental philosopher *per se*, but rather to think with and against Arendt; what she may offer to our understanding of the crisis.

## 2.2 Philosophizing Ecological Crisis: Overcoming Anthropocentrism

Before exploring what Arendt may offer to discourse about ecological crisis, we need to review some relevant work of environmental philosophy to show why anthropocentrism became problematized as a root cause of ecological crisis, and we need to address some of the important problems arising from such analysis.[29] This literature review helps us to understand what has been discussed and see where Arendt's work may be situated, especially considering that Arendt

[28] See Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015).

[29] My survey of the literature is predominantly English-language writing and those which published in English speaking countries, as the discipline was established in the United States. To this extent, my literature review is not extensive enough to capture the whole discipline or discussions nor intended to do so due to the limited space and time. Likewise, I do not intend to deny the existence or significance of other regional or linguistic works in environmental philosophy.

embraced a form of anthropocentrism in her own work.

Environmental ethics, as a distinct discipline, was established around the 1970s in the U.S..[30] The advent of the academic discipline reflected an increase in environmental awareness of the time. The fact that we can characterize the current period as "ecological crisis" may unsurprisingly be a result of the collective thinking about our relationship with the environment. The nineteenth century onward has been an important period for the growth of environmental scholarly works and consciousness in the humanities in the U.S.[31] Early environmental awareness was centered around the loss and preservation of wilderness areas, such as seen in the writings of Henry David Thoreau and John Muir. The first national park, Yellowstone, was established in 1872, and John Muir's enthusiastic work on the preservation of wilderness areas not only successfully led to the establishment of Yosemite National Park in 1890, but also contributed to the popularization of the idea and experience of "wilderness" in the United States.[32]

However, in the post-World War II era, the range of environmental consciousness was expanded from "wilderness" as pristine or special nature, to "the environment" as something more close to our daily lives, such as land, soil, water, air, and food. For example, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) addressed the danger of using highly toxic synthetic pesticide DDT in agriculture, challenging the dominant view that sees DDT as a symbol of scientific

[30] For the detail information of the academic establishment of the field Environmental Ethics, see Roderick Frazier Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics* (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989). See also Eugene Hargrove, "Weak Anthropocentric Intrinsic Value," *The Monist* 75, no. 2 (1992): 183. In which, Hargrove says "professional environmental ethics arose directly out of the interest in the environment created by Earth Day in 1970." In this dissertation, I use the terms *environmental ethics* and *environmental philosophy* interchangeably when referring to an academic field.

[31] See Roderick Frazier Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind,* 4th ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); Nash, *The Rights of Nature*.

[32] Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, pp.102–3, 122–40.

triumph over the threats to humanity such as diseases and hunger.[33] She revealed uncertainty in the absolute power of "postwar America," which assumed that "science was god, and science was male."[34] Although her book is an environmental science book, she successfully incorporated metaphors in her writing, which enabled her to reach a wider audience and critically, creatively, and caringly challenged this dominant scientific discourse. A few years after *Silent Spring* was published, the first Earth Day (1970) was established, as well as the Environmental Protection Act, or EPA (1970). Carson's work is undeniably influential in the establishment of these social changes.[35]

While Carson's work raised environmental awareness in society at large, Aldo Leopold's "The Land Ethic" in *A Sand County Almanac* (1949) has widely been considered to be one of the earliest articulations of the need for an environmental ethic.[36] The reason is, as Eugene Hargrove describes, "The Land Ethic" initiated a discussion that "environmental problems are ultimately philosophical in nature," showing the link between ecological destruction and our conceptions of nature and land.[37] In the chapter, Leopold critiques the failure of the existing moral theories to take account of ecology of the land and argues for the need of an ethic that does so otherwise.[38] Given that, he offers the land ethic, which requires two changes to morality; the first is to enlarge the existing moral community to include both biotic and abiotic entities, and the land; and the

[33] Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, 1962, 40th anniversary ed., with an introduction by Linda Lear (Boston: Mariner Books, 2002); Lisa Newton, *The American Experience in Environmental Protection* (Heidelberg: Springer, 2013), pp. 5–6.

[34] Linda Lear, Introduction to *Silent Spring*, by Rachel Carson, 40th anniversary ed. (Boston: Mariner Books, 2002), p. xi.

[35] See more detail about the social background of *Silent Spring* in Lear's introduction: Lear, "Introduction," pp. x–xix.

[36] J. Baird Callicott, *In Defense of the Land Ethic: Essays in Environmental Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 5–6, 15.

[37] Eugene C. Hargrove, *Foundations of Environmental Ethics* (Denton: Environmental Ethics Books, 1989), p. 14.

[38] Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac: With Essays on Conservation from Round River*, 1949 (New York, Random House, 1970), p. 238.

second is to "change the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member [of the land community]."[39] This shift of the role of *Homo sapiens* in the land means that humans should not stand above the land, taking a god-like perspective to determine who/what counts as valuable or worthless in the land community, based solely on human self-interests.[40] That is, the land ethic challenges the assumption of the epistemic and ontological hierarchy in our current moral understanding against nonhuman nature. The land ethic comes with an epistemological and ontological shift in our perceptions and concepts of the moral community and its relationship for ethical transformation.

What Leopold ignited is the long-term debate about anthropocentrism in the academic circle of environmental ethics.[41] One of the catalysts for this debate was the indication that there was a link between human superiority and Western traditions. For example, Lynn White, Jr.'s "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis" explores the cause of ecological destruction in Judeo-Christian tradition, which he describes as "the most anthropocentric religion of the world," that fosters a worldview in which humans are seen as dominators of nature.[42] Richard Routley's "Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental Ethic?" later showed that existing Western ethical principles themselves are already anthropocentric, as the principles are based in "basic (human) chauvinism," meaning satisfying a person's interest is morally permissible as long as it does not harm other humans or oneself.[43] For example, his famous thought experiment, the "last man" example, shows that under traditional, human-chauvinist Western ethics, it is morally

[39] Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, p. 240.

[40] Ibid., p. 240.

[41] Hargrove, "Weak Anthropocentric Intrinsic Value," p. 183.

[42] Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science* 155, no. 3767 (1967): 1205.

[43] Richard Routley, "Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental Ethics?" in *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, eds. Michael E. Zimmerman et al., 4th edition (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, 2005), p. 19.

permissible for the hypothetical last man on the earth to destroy any living or non-living things as long as he wishes. Routley's example portrayed that there was no axiological foundation for other-than-human entities to be valued intrinsically, and the existing axioms allowed humans to treat them only instrumentally, i.e., anthropocentrism. Thus, as Jeremy Sorgen describes, Routley's work suggested the need for a new environmental ethic that can "break with the logic of anthropocentrism,"[44] including "classical and religious humanism,"[45] and that can be based on nonanthropocentric principles.[46]

Thus, some environmental philosophers, particularly earlier ones, started exploring the possibility of such nonanthropocentric value in nature, i.e., intrinsic value. One of the problems in the logic of anthropocentrism is that other-than-human entities are seen as only instrumentally valuable, or that the values of these entities are derived from humans. For example, in "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement. A Summary," Arne Naess, a founder of *deep ecology*, contests the need of overcoming anthropocentric environmentalism, or *shallow ecology*, in which conservation of nature takes place for the sake of human well-being. Instead, Naess defends a biocentric approach, or *deep ecology*, which rejects anthropocentric, or "the man-in environment image" but asserts a biocentric egalitarianist worldview in which each species have "the equal right to live and blossom."[47]

Likewise, Paul Taylor developed a life-centered moral theory in which he defends the inherent worth of other-than-human entities due to the *prima facie* condition of "being members

[44] Jeremy Sorgen, "Beyond the Anthropocentrism Debate: An Adaptive History of Environmental Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 42, no. 2 (Summer 2020): 106.

[45] Sorgen, "Beyond the Anthropocentrism Debate," p. 107.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Arne Naess, "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement. A Summary," *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy* 16, no. 1–4 (1973): 95–96.

of the Earth's community of life" and intrinsic value of realizing their good.[48] That is, the foundation of inherent worth for other-than-human entities is defended independently from human value judgments and perceptions. In *Environmental Ethics*, Holmes Rolston, III also explores nonanthropocentric objective value in nature, arguing that humans are not the producers of the value but the ecosystem of the Earth itself is the carrier of the value, as it is "*able* to produce the *valued experience.*"[49] Rolston's normative approach can be described as ecocentrism, which perceives not only the intrinsic value of other-than human entities but also that of ecosystems themselves.[50]

However, J. Baird Callicott disagrees that there could be an "objective" account of the intrinsic value of nature. In *In Defense of the Land Ethic,* Callicott examines the Cartesian legacy of modern science's dualistic assumption that nature, or physical material itself, should be strictly distinguished from human understanding. That is, nature is ahistorical and non-axiological material, and any sensory experience and values concerning the material are derived from human understanding; there is no such a thing as value *in* things themselves, but only strictly *for* things themselves.[51] To resonate with this scientific worldview, Callicott takes a subjectivist approach toward nonanthropocentric intrinsic value, arguing that valuing nature *for* itself, i.e., intrinsically, is possible without grounding intrinsic value *in* nature independently from our value judgements.[52] This development of subjectivist nonanthropocentric intrinsic value invited another critique from Hargrove, who argues for a "weak anthropocentric" approach

[48] Paul Taylor, "The Ethics of Respect for Nature," *Environmental Ethics* 3, no. 3 (1981): 201.

[49] Holmes Rolston, III, *Environmental Ethics: Duties to and Values in The Natural World* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), p. 4.

[50] Ned Hettinger and Bill Throop, "Refocusing Ecocentrism: De-emphasizing Stability and Defending Wilderness," *Environmental Ethics* 21, no. 1 (1999): 4–7.

[51] Callicott, *In Defense of the Land Ethic*, pp. 133–34.

[52] Ibid., pp. 129–34.

toward the intrinsic value of nature, claiming, for example, that Callicott's theory is not sufficiently nonanthropocentric, since the source of all values is seen to be humans.[53]

Although this literature review on the debate of anthropocentrism does not cover the entire discussion, as you may notice, this debate "deep," "subjective," "objective," "anthropocentric, "nonanthropocentric," and "weak anthropocentric" intrinsic value of nature is confusing. Arguably, one of the reasons is in the term *anthropocentrism* itself. For example, Brian Norton says that this is partly because "a crucial ambiguity in the term *anthropocentrism* has gone unnoticed" by both anthropocentric and nonanthropocentric camps. In his literary survey on anthropocentrism, Ben Mylius also points out that many scholars do not define the term anthropocentrism clearly, and even when defined, it tends to falsely "create the impression that anthropocentrism is exclusively, and inevitably, a matter of normative claims about human superiority."[54] As Norton and Mylius suggest, the term *anthropocentrism* itself has led to unnecessary confusion within the discipline.

Mylius's survey categorizes anthropocentrism into three different kinds, perceptual, descriptive, and normative anthropocentrism. According to Mylius, *perceptual anthropocentrism* describes the *de facto* epistemological condition of human embodiment that any sense-data is always already informed and received by a human body.[55] *Descriptive anthropocentrism*, on the other hand, is about the locality of reference point in knowledge; that is, descriptive anthropocentrism assumes that humans are the measurement of the world.[56] Mylius explains that this descriptive anthropocentrism is closely tied with, what he calls, *passively normative anthropocentrism*, which encompasses the human-centered mode of inquiry. For example, an

[53] Hargrove, "Weak Anthropocentric Intrinsic Value," p. 196.

[54] Ben Mylius, "Three Types of Anthropocentrism," *Environmental Philosophy* 15, no. 2 (2018): 161.

[55] Ibid., pp. 159, 166–68.

[56] Ibid., pp. 159, 168–83.

inquiry, or act of examining, presuppose that there are already at least some forms of interests in the object of inquiry. To this extent, passively normative anthropocentrism describes this often unnoticed or unconscious act of valuing in the way we study or inquiry about the world.[57] However, there is another kind of normative anthropocentrism, and that is *actively normative anthropocentrism*. Mylius describes this second kind as what environmental philosophers are mostly concerned with, because this actively normative anthropocentrism is about human superiority.[58] To this extent, objective nonanthropocentric intrinsic value can be described as an example of the unintended denial, at least struggle with, of perceptual anthropocentrism for overcoming actively normative anthropocentrism, as seen in the cases of Taylor and Rolston.

The problem is that there is little attention paid to the historicity and its significance of *overcoming* anthropocentrism and of what kinds, and the struggle with anthropocentrism is not limited within environmental philosophy. For example, in *Ecological Literature and the Critique of Anthropocentrism*, Bryan L. Moore provides an ecocritical literary survey of anthropocentrism in the Western literature philosophical and religious tradition. Although anthropocentrism persists, Moore reformulates the existence of nonanthropocentric or antianthropocentric writings in the tradition, showing that opposition of anthropocentrism is a part of the tradition as well. One of the notable antianthropocentrisms is witnessed in the 17th century science through Galileo's discovery of the heliocentric worldview. This antianthropocentrism is not in a sense of the opposition to normative anthropocentrism, i.e., human chauvinism, but rather to the extent of overcoming an anthropocentric perspective for the pursuit of scientific objective perspective.[59] As Moore quotes E.A. Burtt's statement on Galileo, *anthropos*, or humans are thought as "an

[57] Mylius, "Three Types of Anthropocentrism," pp. 159, 183–85.

[58] Ibid., pp. 159, 185–86.

[59] Bryan L. Moore, *Ecological Literature and the Critique of Anthropocentrism* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 14.

irrelevant spectator and insignificant effect of the great mathematical system which is the substance of reality."[60] Galileo's contribution of the heliocentric worldview in science, to this extent, can be considered to be anti-descriptive anthropocentrism.

For another example, Cartesian dualism can be understood as the rejection of perceptual anthropocentrism, as it rejects the embodied understanding of the world for the sake of attaining a scientific worldview—"the world as it is."[61] In *The Death of Nature,* Carolyn Merchant analyses modern philosophy through Bacon and Hobbes and argues that the scientific worldview sees the world, including human bodies and nature, like mechanisms, through which the world becomes "subject to governance by law and to predictability through deductive reasoning."[62] That is, this view configures the world as a conceivable and controllable system of mechanisms; the world is dissectible, replaceable, and fixable if one knows the world *better*. This "betterment" is narrowly measured in objectivity. This narrow and yet powerful lens of reduction causes, what Merchant calls, "the death of nature," which illegitimates other-than-mechanistic views of nature and rationalizes exploitation of nature.[63] To this extent, the notion of objectivity is disembodied, and it assumes that "humans" can and perhaps should, remove "perception" from themselves contradictorily. Merchant notes that although this mechanical worldview has become "common sense reality" nowadays, the process of the establishment was not struggle-free, being "fraught with anxiety, confusion, and instability in both the intellectual and social spheres," [64] such as

[60] E.A. Burtt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science* (New York: Doubleday, 1954) quoted in B. L. Moore, *Ecological Literature and the Critique of Anthropocentrism* (Cham: Springer International Publishing AG, 2017), p.14.

[61] Neil Evernden, *The Natural Alien: Humankind and Environment* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 52.

[62] Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1990), p. 214.

[63] Merchant, *The Death of Nature*, p. 193.

[64] Ibid., p. 193.

religious and political institutions.[65] To this extent, overcoming perceptual anthropocentrism is not merely about the struggle for intellectual certainty, as Merchant contends, but also about struggle for power.[66]

Likewise, in "Anthropocentrism: A Misunderstood Problem," Tim Hayward critiques the oversimplification of antianthropocentrism as the good in environmental philosophy, and shows the negative implication of overcoming anthropocentrism in the example of modern science:

> Overcoming anthropocentrism has meant appreciating that 'Man' is not the centre of the universe or the measure of all things…. This cognitive displacement of human beings from centre stage in the greater scheme of things has been made possible, above all, by developments in modern science. This detached view of humans has been made passively by just that kind of objectivating knowledge which more recently has been held to lie at the root of an attitude toward the natural world to be condemned as anthropocentric. For what the rise of objectivating science has done is bring with it the idea that humans can in some ways stand apart from the rest of nature: the achievement of objectivity carries with it an enhanced view of the power and autonomy of subjectivity; and that is at the heart of a set of attitudes which privilege human faculties, capacities and interests over those of nonhuman entities.[67]

What Hayward means by "cognitive displacement of human centre of the universe" seems to match with Mylius's descriptive anthropocentrism, as well as perceptual anthropocentrism, as the displacement is for the sake of objectivity in science in this context. As Hayward says, overcoming anthropocentrism, or in a sense of perceptual and descriptive anthropocentrism, seems to be the articulation of humans and nature dualism and that of humans' domination over nature through "an enhanced view of the power and autonomy of subjectivity."[68] This imaginary

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[65] See Merchant, *The Death of Nature*, chap. 8.

[66] Ibid., pp. 216–217. Also, in a Foucauldian sense, knowledge is power, and power produces knowledge. Power-struggle in the discourse on *certainty* constitutes a certain way of being human subject, and reciprocally the discourse on human subject manifests power. To this extent, the modern discourse on *anti-anthropocentrism* is political. For more information, how power and knowledge are intertwined, see Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* second vintage books edition, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1995).

[67] Tim Hayward, "Anthropocentrism: A Misunderstood Problem," *Environmental Values* 6, no. 1 (1997): 50.

[68] Hayward, "Anthropocentrism," p. 50.

liberation from cognitive limitation is what makes a modern scientific worldview. As Carson critiques in *Silent Spring,* the modern scientific worldview, particularly that of humans as the conquers of the natural world, is one of the common problems that many environmental philosophers, like Merchant, tackle.

Although Hayward critiques the debate of anthropocentrism due to its unclear specifications, his attempt is not to deny all of antianthropocentrism projects but to reclassify the critique of normative anthropocentrism as speciesism and human chauvinism in order to avoid unnecessary confusion. Hayward's reasoning is in the question of how ethics, or accountability is possible. According to Hayward, certain parts of anthropocentrism, i.e., perceptual and descriptive anthropocentrism should serve as the "benchmark" of ethical judgement and action, "if the ultimate point of an ethic is to yield a determinate guide to human action."[69] Thus, he argues that this benchmark is ineliminable in ethics, as "what is unavoidable about anthropocentrism is precisely what makes ethics possible at all."[70] Given that, he calls out radically nonanthropocentric axiological theory and values as "insidiously anthropocentric" in the manner which the intentional and unintentional denial of human role of *selecting* and *applying* certain values to other-than human entities "without certain warrant for doing so."[71]

One of the problems of anti-perceptual anthropocentrism is the eraser of the viewer in the act of viewing, and its implication in ethics and politics. In "Situated Knowledges," Donna Haraway offers a feminist critique of scientific objectivity, which fabricates "a conquering gaze from nowhere."[72] According to Haraway, scientific objectivity aims for an impartial view

[69] Hayward, "Anthropocentrism," p. 56.

[70] Ibid., p. 57.

[71] Ibid., p. 56.

[72] Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 581.

through denouncing limits, partiality, i.e., embodiment, in the hopes of searching "translation, convertibility, mobility of meanings, and universality."[73] Although this impartial gaze may sound neutral in a sense of strict materialist understanding of the world, trying to be nowhere in the finite and limited earth and world actually denounces the traceability, i.e., accountability of our meaning-making action and deed; rather, being nowhere for the transcendental view is being everywhere for "the interest of unfettered power."[74] That is why Haraway does not just say "a gaze from nowhere" but "a *conquering* gaze from nowhere." That is, knowledge that hides the locality of its source is irresponsible to the extent that we cannot call it into account.[75] Instead, Haraway calls for situated knowledge, which is feminist objectivity, derived from the very condition that every vision is embodied so that the premise is that embodied vision is always a partial view. Thus, as opposed to scientific objectivity, Haraway argues that the acceptance of embodied subjectivity in situated knowledge is accountable as it is taking partial and locatable position, and importantly such normativity of the positioning is possible through "taking risks in a world where 'we' are permanently mortal, that is, not in 'final' control."[76] In this sense, as Haraway says, the issue of disembodied gaze, or anti-perspective anthropocentrism, is manifested in "ethics and politics more than epistemology."[77]

If being partial is the condition for ethics to be possible, then we might be able to say that that is also the condition for a moral way of living with others in the world. Haraway's account of situated knowledge opens a possibility of a pluralistic understanding of the world, where each of us is irreducible to the abstract *anthropos*. In other words, the issue is that although this

[73] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," p. 580.

[74] Ibid., p. 581.

[75] Ibid., p. 583.

[76] Ibid., pp. 595–96.

[77] Ibid., p. 579.

*anthropos* appears to encompass all humans, it is highly questionable and doubtful through an embodied onto-epistemological understanding. As Hayward points out, placing *humanity* altogether as the blame of ecological crisis is "a practical and strategic mistake," which "obscure the real causes of the harms as much as the real incidence of benefits: the harms seldom affect all and only nonhumans; the benefits seldom accrue to all humans."[78] Like Obama, the former president of the United States used the word *mankind* in his speech in Hiroshima, Japan; what is to be blamed for the military usage of the atomic bomb is that "*mankind* possessed the means to destroy itself,"[79] not a specific group nor institutions but all of humanity in the name of mankind. This tactic homogenizes people's responsibility and subtly undermines social justice. From a political perspective, this disembodied gaze of power, in the name of objectivity or humankind, makes it harder for one to identify what causes, denies, and alienates oneself from one's sociopolitical experience, or even from, what Arendt calls, our condition of being "earth-bound."[80] To this extent, the critique of anthropocentrism should also address the question of which *anthropos*' experience, perspective, and value is centered at the expense of others. Whose view is conceived to be objective, and whose view is dismissed at what expense?

### 2.3 Overcoming What *Anthropos*?

As discussed in the previous section, the earlier critique of anthropocentrism in general tends to frame *anthropos* as the locality of the problem for ecological crisis altogether without accounting for the differentially embodied conditions and sociopolitical experiences of humanity (and without accounting for the ways in which modern science is deeply anti-anthropocentric).

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[78] Hayward, "Anthropocentrism: A Misunderstood Problem," p. 58.

[79] "Text of President Obama's Speech in Hiroshima, Japan," *New York Times*, May 27, 2016. Emphasis added. https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/28/world/asia/text-of-president-obamas-speech-in-hiroshima-japan.html.

[80] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 3.

Although the critique of normative anthropocentrism is important, we do not have a unified "role of *Homo sapiens* [as] conquerors,"[81] and such abstractness may dismiss the power-struggle within ecological crisis. In this section, I show that the refusal of placing human beings in general as the cause of ecological crisis does not undermine the accountability of human action for environmental issues; rather, arguably it is an attempt to take accountability very seriously. Although ecological crisis can be a threat to humanity in general, since the earth is the only home for humanity so far, the experience of ecological crisis is different from people to people—not merely at the level of bodily differences but also at a sociopolitical level. Likewise, as some scholars also contend, I argue that social oppression is inseparable from the domination of the other-than-human-world.

For example, Murray Bookchin is one of the notable figures who advocated for critical analysis of ecological crisis with a strong focus on social hierarchical dynamic, such as sex, religion, age, politics and economic systems (e.g., capitalism).[82] In his theory, social ecology, he argues that "the way human beings deal with each other as social beings is crucial to addressing the ecological crisis,"[83] as he finds that the domination of nature is derived from "the domination of human by human."[84] According to Bookchin, this domination of human by human is rooted in hierarchical relationships found within as sex, religion, age, etc. Although there is much more to his theory, such as reconfiguration of human society in a continuum with the natural world,[85] he

[81] Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, p. 240.

[82] Murray Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy* (Oakland: AK Press, 2005).

[83] Murray Bookchin, "What is social ecology?" in *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, eds. Michael E. Zimmerman et al. 4th edition (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, 2005), p. 462.

[84] Bookchin, "What is social ecology?," p. 472.

[85] Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom*, p. 369. For an overall analysis of social ecology and Bookchin's contribution, see Eileen Crist, "Social Ecology," in *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy*, vol. 2, eds. J. Baird Callicott and Robert Frodeman (Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2009), pp. 528–31; Andrew Light and

contends that we cannot solve ecological crisis without radical social change. To this extent, his analysis does not reduce the cause of ecological crisis to ideology independent of context, but finds social dynamic as the locus of ecological crisis. Bookchin's analysis highlights the importance of considering humans as social beings.

Likewise, other environmental scholars, such as ecofeminists and environmental justice scholars, have also critiqued environmental ethics for abstracting the "environment" and failing to see how race, gender, class, poverty, i.e., sociopolitical conditions shape and influence environmental issues, and vice versa. For example, in *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature,* Val Plumwood, drawing from a feminist analysis, argues for "nature as the missing piece" in a wholistic approach toward understanding the logic of domination, in addition to race, gender, and class.[86] That is, the domination of nature is not simply a byproduct of social problems. Rather, she shows that the domination of nature is an integral part of Western cultural hegemony; thus, we should combat such domination politically.[87] To this extent, Plumwood criticizes Bookchin for not recognizing that the domination of nature is "as political as human relations to other humans,"[88] as his theory asserts that the reformation of social hierarchy has to come *before* radically addressing the domination of nature.[89] Rather, Plumwood argues that the way that Western dualism constructs and maintains the hierarchical dynamic between humans and nature is not separated from other forms of dualisms, such as men and women, culture and nature, self and other, but it is linked by associating the latter side of these other dualisms with nature "as a

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Avner de-Shalit, eds., *Moral and Political Reasoning in Environmental Practice* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2003), pp. 253–58.

[86] Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 1994), p. 2.

[87] Ibid., pp. 1–18.

[88] Ibid., p. 17.

[89] Ibid., pp. 14–16.

sphere of inferiority."[90] As an example of the interconnected domination of women and nature, she states elsewhere that:

> Anthropocentrism and androcentrism in particular are linked by the rationalist conception of the human self as masculine and by the account of authentically human characteristics as centered around rationality and the exclusion of its contrasts (especially characteristics regarded as feminine, animal, or natural) as less human.[91]

What Plumwood highlights is that the conception of human self operates exclusively, as the self is gendered in the image of masculinity and rationality. Plumwood's analysis is similar to Simone de Beauvoir's account of gendered subjectivity, which shows that anything that does not fit the narrowly constructed sphere of human subject becomes absolute Other—as the Other, or woman is defined as what is not the Subject, man.[92] For Plumwood, this "man" is socio-politically privileged and white.[93] To this extent, Plumwood argues that hierarchical dualisms between humans and nature, and between men and women, should be considered together, since environmental exploitation and domination of women both rely on patriarchal, rationalist assumptions about human self.

Furthermore, Karen Warren critiques that such failure of understanding the interconnectedness of domination in environmental issues "perpetuate[s], rather than overcome[s], the source of oppression."[94] For example, Emmanuela Opoku and Trish Glazebrook bring important attention to how climate change impacts people in northeast Ghana differently due to preexisting gender roles, and they argue that climate policy has to be gender

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[90] Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature,* p. 4.

[91] Val Plumwood, "Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism," *Hypatia* 6, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 2.

[92] See particularly the introduction of *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir: Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 1949, trans. and ed. H. M. Parshley (New York: Vintage Books, 1989).

[93] Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, p. 4.

[94] Karen J. Warren, "The Power and the Promise of Ecological Feminism," in *Ecological Feminist Philosophies*, ed. Karren J. Warren (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 34.

sensitive to address such unequal impacts. Although Ghanaian women, as subsistence farmers, play an important role in national food security despite the economically disadvantageous gender structure, Opoku and Glazebrook argue that both international and local levels of climate food policy often fail to incorporate gender analysis, stating that:

> In Ghana, gender and women's issues are inadequately integrated into climate and agricultural policy for the gender gap to be closed. Given that women farmers provide at least seventy percent of what goes into Ghana's national food-basket it is urgently critical that Ghanaian policy makers understand women's roles in agriculture and contribution to food security in order that they can continue to feed the nation.[95]

Their analysis suggests that some climate policy, environmental analysis, or environmental action fails to reflect the lived experience of women or those of marginalized populations, which may reinforce environmental injustice.

Racial injustice is also tied up with environmental injustice. For example, Robert D. Bullard argues that environmentalism in the U.S. often fails to recognize racial inequalities like the disproportional burden of toxic waste sites on black communities compared to white communities.[96] Furthermore, he points out that systemic racism plays into black people's job-related exposure to toxic industrial materials, explaining that:

> Black workers are twice as likely to be unemployed as their white counterparts. Fear of unemployment acts as a potent incentive for many blacks to stay in and accept jobs they know are health threating.[97]

Systemic racism creates a difficult situation where black workers may feel that they need to prioritize job security over health. Environmental justice scholarship shows us the difficulty of demanding environmental justice without addressing social injustice simultaneously. In other

[95] Emmanuela Opoku and Trish Glazebrook, "Gender, Agriculture, and Climate Policy in Ghana," *Environmental Ethics* 40, no. 4 (Winter 2018): 384–85.

[96] Robert D. Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000), pp. 9, 40–45.

[97] Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie*, p. 10.

words, environmental activism that sees the degradation of "nature" as the only problem may reinforce systemic social injustice.

Furthermore, seeing land as ahistorical material is problematic. The dualism between human and nature, or culture and nature, assumes that the former side of the binary is what makes meanings and history. Nature is in this regard valueless without human interference, as seen in John Locke's labor theory of value.[98] In this context, land is problematically thought to be timeless and placeless—*terra nullius*, empty space.[99] Although this timeless and placeless understanding of land, what Merchant calls the *death of nature*, may lead to exploitation of the land as mere resource, the effect of abstraction does not end with land. The construction of land as empty space can be violent, as it leads to a failure to recognize people's lived experience in the land, which includes their resistance against such abstraction. For example, Nick Estes shows the importance of understanding colonial context in the problem of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), which was originally planned to cross a predominantly white residential area but was relocated to north of Standing Rock for "environmental and economic concerns."[100] In contrast, Standing Rock appeared to the oil industry and the federal government to be empty "enough" space for economic gain.[101] To put this into context, Estes describes how U.S. settlers relocated and terminated indigenous tribes for the sake of resources, and how the Oceti Sakowin have resisted against this serial violence. Estes emphasizes that "#NoDAPL movement is explicitly nonviolent," and describes their resistance in historical continuity, claiming that "like our

[98] John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government,* edited by Peter Laslett (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 285–302.

[99] For the detailed analysis on the historical development and manifestation of the concept of *terra nullius*, see Whitney Bauman, *Theology, Creation, and Environmental Ethics: From Creatio Ex Nihilo to Terra Nullius* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

[100] Nick Estes, "Fighting for Our Lives: #NoDAPL in Historical Context," *Wicazo Sa Review* 32, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 115.

[101] Estes, "Fighting for Our Lives," pp. 115–16, 119.

ancestors' war of the nineteenth century, our current war is also defensive—it is to protect water and land from inevitable spoliation in the name of profit."[102] However, these protesters were labeled as terrorists by the state power.[103] Through reflecting on Estes's situated analysis, we can see that philosophizing without critical and caring readings of contexts of place can be violent. In this regard, Leopold's land ethic, for example, may fail to recognize the struggle and resistance of the people in a colonial historical context, which is indispensable for ethical consideration of the land and the people.

What we should not forget is the fact that sociopolitical minorities are not simply victims of environmental injustice, but rather they are often at frontline fighting against such injustice, such as seen in Estes's example. Many people have engaged in resistance and grass roots actions for environmental justice even when their opponents are their own local community, local government, the national government, and multi-national corporations: to name a few, Chipko movement in India,[104] #NoDAPL movement in the U.S.,[105] African-American women's grassroot actions against toxic facilities in Atlanta, Georgia.[106] Robert Bullard and Glenn S. Johnson help us to see the agency and autonomy of environmental activism of people of color in the U.S. in particular, stating that:

> The impetus for change came from people of color, grassroots activists, and their "bottom-up" leadership approach. Grassroots groups organized themselves, educated

[102] Estes, "Fighting for Our Lives," p. 119.

[103] Anne Spice, "Heal the People, Heal the Land: An interview with Freda Huson," in *Standing with Standing Rock: Voices from the #NoDAPL Movement,* eds. Nick Estes and Jaskiran Dhillon (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), p. 215.

[104] Vandana Shiva and J. Bandyopadhyay, "The Evolution, Structure, and Impact of the Chipko Movement," *Mountain Research and Development* 6, no. 2 (1986): 133–42.

[105] Estes, "Fighting for Our Lives," pp. 115–22.

[106] Antoinette M Gomez, Fatemeh Shafiei, and Glenn S Johnson, "Black Women's Involvement in the Environmental Justice Movement: An Analysis of Three Communities in Atlanta, Georgia," *Race, Gender & Class* 18, no. ½ (2011): 189–214.

> themselves, and empowered themselves to make fundamental change in the way environmental protection is administered in their communities.[107]

As Bullard and Johnson show, it is problematic to assume that sociopolitical minorities are only victims of environmental injustices; rather, we should recognize the important political role that sociopolitical minorities play in environmental justice. For example, the recent worldwide action against climate change, School Strike for Climate, was led by children and other young people in many parts of the world. In the movement, they took action against adults' inaction toward climate change, particularly that of politicians and governments not exercising their obvious responsibility and privilege.[108] There is no point in disregarding the youth's demand for a livable earth and world due to their age alone. I discuss below more in detail on the issue of children and politics and how politics is possible through the work of Arendt in later chapters. As seen in the case of School Strike for Climate, political struggles and resistance against ecological crisis are not limited to those who are traditionally thought of as political.

If we address ecological crisis politically, or perhaps, if we can recognize ecological crisis politically, then our inquiry, theory, and practice about ecological crisis need to take account of these struggles and resistance. Thus, taking the accountability of human action seriously does not only require asking the question of how accountability is possible, but also how we have failed to be accountable, and who and what has been excluded from the sphere of accountability. It is precisely these questions that I am concerned with in my dialogue with and against Arendt, a scholar who put *plurality* at the very heart of her political theory.

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[107] Robert D. Bullard and Glenn S. Johnson, "Environmental Justice: Grassroots Activism and Its Impact on Public Policy Decision Making," *Journal of Social Issues* 56, no. 3 (2000): 560.

[108] Somini Sengupta, "Protesting Climate Change, Young People Take to Streets in a Global Strike," *New York Times*, September 20, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/20/climate/global-climate-strike.html.

## 2.4 Existing Scholarship on Arendt and Ecological Crisis

Arendt's scholarly work is rarely present in the field of environmental scholarship. As previously discussed, one of the reasons could be that environmental philosophy, as a discipline, started off by arguing that environmental destruction is derived from anthropocentrism. Perhaps because of this, political theorists like Arendt may have not received much attention, as she is known for her rigorous analysis of the human condition by focusing on the *vita activa*, or labor, work, and action; i.e., what we *do* as humans. Another possible reason is that earlier environmental philosophy and ethics found the root cause of ecological crisis in our conceptions and values of nature, i.e., the domain of thought, to question, for example, how we *think* of nature and how we *value* things and ourselves. If earlier environmental philosophy had a general agenda, it was to figure out how we can think better to act better.[109] In this type of approach, the problem was thought of as a systemic conceptual (ethical) issue, such as seen in the critique of anthropocentrism and the dualism between humans and nature, and overcoming such ideological problems would allow us to act ecologically soundly. However, in *The Human Condition*, Arendt takes a different approach. In her critique of modernity, she suggests that the problem is not so much ideological in the sense of thinking correctly or badly. Rather, what she found problematic in modernity is the fact that we are "unable to understand, that is, to think and speak about things which nevertheless we are able to do."[110] That is, the issue is our inability to comprehend the capacity, limits, and significance of human activities, such as labor, work, and speech and action, and yet we are still doing (or not doing) without understanding them. Thus, Arendt clarifies, her project is not to figure out thought, or how we (should) think about things, but rather to resituate

[109] V.P.J. Arponen calls this approach in environmental scholarship as ideological approach, which presumes psychologism that actions are derived from mind, i.e., the domain of thought such as ideas and concepts. See V.P.J. Arponen, "The Cultural Causes of Environmental Problems," *Environmental Ethics* 36, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 133–49.

[110] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 3.

ourselves to figure out "what we are doing" in an existential sense.[111] Arguably, her account of the human condition is helpful for the analysis of ecological crisis. Although there are not many, there are a few notable scholarly works that already critically engage with the work of Arendt concerning ecological crisis. In this section, I offer a review of some of these existing scholarly works to situate my own project and to explore her possible contributions and problems as a theoretical tool for analyzing ecological crisis.

For example, Paul Voice (2013) extends Arendt's work by critiquing the discipline of environmental philosophy for either often ignoring ontological questions in its search for ethical claims or focusing them too much to address practical application of the theory. He argues that Arendt's notion of *vita activa* can provide an existentialist account of ontology, or human condition, which can enfold both issues of being (ontological) and meaning (action).[112] Voice explains that the *vita activa*, which consists of labor, work, and action, is "a normative principle of self-understanding that addresses the question of 'who' (rather than 'what') we are and reveals, [Arendt] argues, the human condition."[113] For Arendt, the human condition should be understood through types of activities in relation to particular domains, such as earth, world, private, and public. For example, labor is the activity in the domain of the private, where consumption and reproduction take place for our biological necessity. That said, labor alone is insufficient to describe who we are as humanity, as Arendt considers that work and particularly action are indispensable activities that ensure human plurality or political life. Thus, through the lens of Arendt, Voice contends that our consumer society not only falsely reduces humans to mere consumers but also misunderstands our "human condition," or the existential capacities, limits,

[111] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 5.

[112] Paul Voice, "Consuming the World: Hannah Arendt on Politics and the Environment," *Journal of International Political Theory* 9, no. 2 (October 2013): 178–82.

[113] Voice, "Consuming the World," p. 180.

and significance of political life.[114] That is, in such a labor-dominant way of living, political life already lost its significance by "view[ing] the world primarily with the eyes of a consumer."[115] Following Voice, Arendt's work may help us to understand addressing our relationship with nature alone is insufficient, especially if we need to address ecological crisis politically.

David Macauley (1996) offers a different ecological reading of the work of Arendt, particularly her concept of earth alienation. In *The Human Condition*, Arendt describes humans as "earth-bound creatures,"[116] meaning that "the earth is the very quintessence of the human condition."[117] However, she contends that through modernity, we refuse to respect the earthly condition in order to become "dweller[s] of the universe" for the pursuit of objectivity.[118] Macauley explains that the neglect of this earthly condition "signifies to Arendt a fundamental rebellion against the human condition,"[119] and leads us to an alienation from the earth. Arguably, this alienation can be understood as a form of overcoming anthropocentrism, particularly perceptual and descriptive ones, as discussed previously. Macauley describes this earth alienation as "withdrawal from and loss of a cultural rootedness in place and estrangement from the earth."[120] The fact that Macauley uses the word *place* to describe what we are alienated from is important. Although Macauley values Arendt's analysis of earth alienation, he points out that Arendt's view of the earth is more like a globe, "one homogeneous whole." Therefore, she fails

[114] Voice, "Consuming the World," p. 188.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 3

[117] Ibid., p. 2.

[118] Ibid., p. 3.

[119] David Macauley, "Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Place: From Earth Alienation to *Oikos*," in *Minding Nature: The Philosophers of Ecology*, ed. David Macauley (New York: The Guilford Press, 1996), p 104.

[120] Macauley, "Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Place," p. 105.

to see the "geographic difference and the uniqueness of living in particular places."[121] He suggests that Arendt's view of the earth as space rather than place may derive from her political discourse about the public and private sphere, which results in Arendt failing to grasp the contextuality and complexity of the earth as a place.[122] McCauley's critique thus makes use of Arendt's theory of alienation while filling a gap in her own theory, and is therefore vital for an environmental reading of Arendt.

Jill Hargis (2016) argues that Arendt's theory of world alienation can reveal why environmentalists have struggled to produce a widescale political movement for climate change beyond the narrative of individual self-interests. For Arendt, modernity consists of the loss of political significance due to the turn to the self (interests), which causes world alienation—the loss of collective care for the world.[123] Hargis suggests that we are still in the state of world alienation, and thus we cannot comprehend "why acting politically is important"[124] This is why she reasons that some environmental institutions fail to show climate change as a collective political issue, and instead reinforce a liberal ideology of individualism through falsely framing "action" for climate change as individual "choices" such as buying hybrid cars or reusable straws. Furthermore, she adds that such individualism is reinforced by psychological market analysis of green consumers in order to "control people's reaction to the message."[125] Hargis draws from Arendt's critique of psychological understanding of humans and critiques that the reduction of people to mere predictable consumers undermines political agency in environmental movements.

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[121] Macauley, "Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Place," p. 108.

[122] Ibid., pp. 107–8, 124–25.

[123] Arendt, *The Human* Condition, p. 6; Jill Hargis, "Hannah Arendt's Turn to the Self and Environmental Response to Climate Change Paralysis," *Environmental Politics* 25, no. 3 (2016): 476–477.

[124] Hargis, "Hannah Arendt's Turn to the Self…," p. 476.

[125] Ibid., p. 484.

Instead of seeing humans in plurality, Hargis contends that the framing of individualism "not only radically individualizes decision making about climate change, [but] it also treats people as largely uniform and predictable."[126] That is, some of the tactics that environmental movements employ reduce spontaneous political agents into a predictable mass.

This reduction is not limited to green consumerism. Maike Weißpflug (2019) critiques the abstract discourse of the Anthropocene through Arendt's critique of modernity. The term *Anthropocene*, popularized by Paul Crutzen and Eugene F. Stoermer (2000),[127] symbolizes a new geological era, in which human activities in geology and ecology exceed and alter natural cycles. Weißpflug problematizes the homogenized narrative of ecological destruction in the Anthropocene narrative, which is "deeply embedded in ideas about the relationship between man and nature, which has developed within the discourse of modernity."[128] Likewise, she contends that although politics should be formed by "the perspective of the many," political discourse around environmental issues is dominated by a few technocrats' perspectives.[129] Her critique is drawn from Arendt's political theory of plurality, which Arendt defines as the condition of all politics.[130] Instead of the insular narratives of technocrats, Weißpflug argues that:

> The Anthropocene situation itself is complex and does not fit into one grand narrative: climate change has multitudes of impacts and biodiversity loss occurs across many scales, these changes take various forms and extents and exist within diverse cultural and historical contexts. The same is true for soil degradation, pollution, air and water quality. We can name and lament these things, but in this abstract form they will remain 'thin' and complex as nature and people themselves. Instead of one grand but 'thin' narrative,

[126] Hargis, "Hannah Arendt's Turn to the Self…," p. 485.

[127] Paul J. Crutzen and Eugene F. Stoermer, "The 'Anthropocene'," *IGBP Newsletter* 41 (2000): 17–18.

[128] Maike Weißpflug, "A Natural History for the 21st Century: Rethinking the Anthropocene Narrative with Arendt and Adorno," in *The Anthropocene Debate and Political Science*, eds. Thomas Hickmann et al. (London: Routledge, 2019), p. 16.

[129] Weißpflug, "A Natural History for the 21st Century," p. 23.

[130] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 7.

> thick descriptions and narratives have to be told, recent and old narratives about human-environment relations.[131]

]Given Arendt's account of political condition of plurality, Weißpflug's analysis shows the importance of decentralization of the Anthropocene narrative "from one unified narrative to a plurality of stories," requiring the presence of many in the discourse.[132] This corresponds to my earlier analysis about sociopolitical minorities in the discourse of environmental (in)justice. It is vital for us to ensure plurality for the discourse of ecological crisis.

Following these analyses, alienation from the earth and world, or from the human condition seem to manifest two different issues: one is an attempt to uproot bodily or earthly condition of humans for objectivity, and the other is the denial of our worldly condition of plurality. How are alienation and world alienation related for Arendt, and possible for ecological crisis? Kelly Oliver's analysis of Arendt's theory may help. In *Earth and World: Philosophy after the Apollo Missions* (2015), Oliver explores the conceptions of earth and world of Kant, Arendt, Heidegger, and Derrida in order to develop an earth ethics .[133] In her analysis of Arendt's notions of earth and world, Oliver describes Arendt as "the philosopher of limits,"[134] as she helps us to understand the boundaries of our existence, such as between life and world, being and meaning, earth and world, and labor and work.[135] For example, for Arendt, the earth and the world are completely different things, having specific relationality as humans: one as *animal laborans* and the other as *homo faber*. Oliver characterizes this difference by saying that "the

[131] Weißpflug, "A Natural History for the 21st Century," p. 26.

[132] Ibid., p. 23.

[133] Kelly Oliver, *Earth and World: Philosophy After the Apollo Missions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

[134] Oliver, *Earth and World*, p. 100.

[135] Ibid., p. 97.

earth corresponds to being whereas the world corresponds to meaning."[136] The earth is almost synonymous with the word *limit* to the extent that the earth literally binds our perception, understanding, and physical movement; the earth is the condition of our living as *animal laborans*. This limited aspect of the earthliness is important to understand how the world differs for Arendt. The world, which humans as *homo faber* built upon the earth to inhabit, signifies a sense of endurance and lasting against the natural cycle of life that our mortal body is bounded to. In this fabricated stable sphere, the common world stands where people can partake in caring for the meaningful cohabitation with others in plurality, or humanity; as Oliver says, the world is opposed to isolation, as "the world is always plural and shared."[137]

Although the world, due to its intentionality, may appear to be unbounded to anything other than plurality, that is not the case. Although people can be existentially spontaneous through action and speech,[138] meanings people produce and share in the common world are still rooted in and bounded to the earth and our earthly body. As Haraway shows, partiality is the condition of responsible "*part"*-icipation in the world, namely, responsible cohabitation; impartiality is an attempt to be everywhere, resulting in the "denial of responsibility."[139] For Arendt, politics (where freedom, equality, and justice are sought) is possible only when we speak and act from our locality instead of nowhere. Thus, the earthliness is the condition of our meaningful cohabitation. Oliver explains that Arendt's concern of world alienation is precisely in the fact we undermine our cohabitation in plurality, which "not only leave[s] us worldless but

[136] Oliver, *Earth and World*, p. 85.

[137] Ibid., p. 74.

[138] Arendt uses the term natality to discuss human's ability to initiate new. Through deed and action, human perform this natality, which nature is unpredictable to others and oneself. I will discuss her concept of natality more in detail in Chapter 3.

[139] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," p. 584.

also refuse[s] our humanity."[140]

To this extent, alienating from the world implies that the denial of our collective effort of constituting our worldly understandings and meanings, which rely on our plural partial perspectives. Earth alienation, the denouncement of one's earthly condition for objective perspective, paves the way for alienation from the world. Arguably, earth alienation manifests itself as unsituated living and world alienation symbolizes the denial, or at least struggle, for cohabitation in plurality. Together, I interpret ecological crisis as the struggle for situated cohabitation. Thus, addressing ecological crisis merely as "environmental" issues may overlook our worldly conditions; we need to address both earth and world alienation.

As I have shown, Arendt portrays the human condition through an understanding of the various limits and boundaries of our existence. However, Arendt's theory alone may not be sufficient to address sociopolitical inequalities and the interdependency of our earthly existence. For example, Oliver argues that "although Arendt insists on our singular bonds to the earth, she overlooks the necessity of biodiversity of life on earth and our bonds to other earthlings."[141] Although Arendt's cohabitation in plurality is limited to the members of humanity and the world, Oliver extends this to other-than-human entities and the earth is necessary for earth ethics.[142] Moreover, as discussed previously, many environmental issues often entail environmental injustice due to preexisting social injustices, often associated with gender, race, disability, and economic class. Arendt's theory alone may not adequately address the fact that partaking in shaping and sharing the common world is not struggle-free, particularly for the marginalized population.

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[140] Oliver, *Earth and World*, p. 212.

[141] Ibid., p. 33.

[142] Ibid., p. 213.

Judith Butler's critical reading of Arendt is also important for understanding the insufficiency of Arendt's theory and yet the possibilities for a more inclusive political theory. Although Butler's project in *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (2015) is not precisely about ecological struggle, her proposal of an ethics of unchosen cohabitation through her reading of Arendt is valuable for the question concerning how to live together on the earth and in the world.[143] For Arendt, the private sphere is a realm of necessities, where people are primarily concerned with family affairs including consumption and reproduction—labor. The public sphere is supposed to be a political space where people discuss and negotiate beyond their immediate concerns of the private sphere. For Arendt, the political space is described as "the space of appearance," which only emerges when people act and speak in plurality.[144] In other words, those who can engage in political affairs in the public sphere are only those who can set aside their immediate life concerns, such as childrearing, hunger, health, and poverty; that is, the public sphere is understood in the image of independence. Thus, Butler argues that Arendt's concept of politics disavows many sociopolitical minorities and fails to acknowledge that we are fundamentally interdependent and precarious.[145] However, Butler sees that Arendt's theory of plurality asserts an ethical grounding in "the unchosen character of earthly cohabitation," as it is "the condition of our very existence as ethical and political beings."[146] That is, plurality serves as a normative ground that we cannot choose with whom to coinhabit the earth. Butler discusses the possibility of extending her political theory not only to inhabitants of the earth but the earth itself,

[143] Chapter 4 of this dissertation discusses Butler's contributions in more depth, as they are particularly important to the question posed here.

[144] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 199.

[145] Butler, *Notes Towards a Performative Theory of Assembly*, pp. 44, 118–20

[146] Ibid., p. 111.

saying that "I seek to offer an ecological supplement to Arendt's anthropocentrism."[147] I discuss Butler's contributions along with her performativity theory in more depth to expand Arendt's contribution for ecological crisis in Chapter 4.

Following these previous analyses, what Arendt may offer is that ecological crisis is not merely the denial of our earthly condition, but also the neglect of our common world. For my broader dissertation project, I would like to put ecological crisis into a context of moral and political crisis, instead of merely seeing it as a crisis of the earth alone. Furthermore, if partiality makes it possible to live morally with others, then in our theory and practice of ecological crisis we should resist alienating *anthropos* both from our earthly and worldly conditions. To this extent, this dissertation is rooted in the work of Arendt to offer the understanding that ecological crisis is the struggle for situated cohabitation. This "struggle" should not be understood and reduced in the abstract and total name of *anthropos*. Rather, the term *struggle* describes my political and ethical commitment of plurality to ensure that the lived experience of differently embodied people and their relationship with other-than-human entities and the land are present and recognized in this dissertation.

[147] Butler, *Notes Towards a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p. 113.

# CHAPTER 3

# ON EARTH AND WORLD ALIENATION: READING ARENDT ON ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

## 3.1 Situating *The Human Condition*

Hannah Arendt starts her book *The Human Condition* (1958) with a story of the launch of the first Russian satellite *Sputnik* into outer space in 1957, which was an event "second in importance to no other, not even to the splitting of the atom."[148] Arendt was especially struck by an American reporter's comment on this event as a "step toward escape from men's imprisonment to the earth," [149] as it revealed the ironic sentiment that the earth is an obstacle to the striving of humanity. The juxtaposition of the earth as a burden and the progress of humanity certainly appears to be a contradictory dichotomy when we consider that humans are "earth-bound creatures," as Arendt describes.[150] How do we come to perceive the earth as a form of imprisonment? For her, the fact that technocratic society is *able to* enact such escape, and yet *unable to* comprehend and speak about the meaning of such self-contradictory action manifests the collapse of our common world and politics in modernity.

In this chapter, I analyze Arendt's critique of modernity, particularly focusing on her analysis of earth alienation and world alienation, in order to explore the question concerning earthly and worldly cohabitation, what I call situated cohabitation. As I discussed in Chapter 2, although Arendt does not theorize about ecological crisis *per se,* Arendt's analysis of modernity's alienation from earth and world can help us understand that ecological crisis is a matter of *both* the denial of earthly and worldly living. As suggested by *The Human Condition*'s

[148] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 1958, 2nd ed., with an introduction by Margaret Canovan (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 1.

[149] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 1.

[150] Ibid., pp. 3, 11.

original intended title of *amor mundi*, or "Love of the World,"[151] Arendt's intention of the book is not simply to describe the conditions of human activities *per se*, but arguably to consider our worldly living on the earth. Her book is a story of what happens when the conditions of our earthly and worldly cohabitation are ignored, misunderstood, and destroyed.

I argue that her critique of modernity allows us to see in depth the historicity of antianthropocentrism, or the scientific and philosophical denial of such earthly and worldly conditions in search of certainty. Arendt argues that part of this denial is derived from blurred distinctions and characteristics of our fundamental human activities, labor, work, and action, what Arendt calls *the vita activa*, throughout the Western philosophical tradition. More specifically, the issue for Arendt is that blurred distinctions of the *vita activa* ultimately lead to the destruction of shared meanings and world, which are possible through our plural partial (embodied) perspectives. Thus, I first analyze the *vita activa* in order to understand what we are actually alienated from and how, and then analyze what alienation means to modernity and possibly to ecological crisis.

However, my attempt here is not to merely focus on her critique of modernity as a sheer disciplinary critique of Western philosophical tradition, as such reading of her work neglects her lived experience, struggle, and profound care for the world. Margaret Canovan suggests that we should read *The Human Condition* while keeping in mind Arendt's experience and writing about totalitarianism,[152] through which Arendt perceived the arrogant belief of "human omnipotence"[153] and witnessed "crimes against humanity."[154] Through her examination of

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[151] Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World,* 2nd ed. (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 324.

[152] Margaret Canovan, *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 99–104.

[153] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, new edition with added prefaces (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1979), p. vi.

Eichmann's trial and the Nazi regime, Arendt finds the god-like act of choosing who may and may not live on the earth destroys and contradicts the idea of humanity and of the human condition of plurality,[155] as Arendt considers that "men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world."[156] Canovan argues that such a reading of *The Human Condition* allows us to understand that her critique of modernity is not a way for her to "recommend an idealized version of Athenian" political theory *per se*, but rather to understand it "as [her] analysis of a desperate predicament and as [her] story with a moral."[157] Drawing from Canovan's interpretation, I engage with Arendt's work as a way of analyzing the desperate predicament of ecological crisis, instead of presenting it as an ideal theoretical solution for ecological crisis. Through this engagement, I argue that Arendt's analysis of earth and world helps us to question the conditions of living together with others on the earth and in the world—situated cohabitation in the time of the ecological crisis.

## 3.2 The Conditions of the *Vita Activa*

In order to understand Arendt's critique of modernity, particularly with a focus on earth and world alienation, first it is important to understand her analysis and configuration of the *vita activa*. [158] Labor, work, and action (which includes speech) are the threefold activities that

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[154] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, revised and enlarged edition (New York: The Viking Press, 1973), p. 268.

[155] Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015), pp. 111–13.

[156] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 7.

[157] Canovan, *Hannah Arendt*, p. 154.

[158] As I emphasized in Chapter 2, I would like to clarify one more time that I am having a dialogue *with* and *against* Arendt. Her configuration of the *vita activa* and her distinction between private and public have some significant concerns and issues from gender, racial, and biocultural perspectives. I attempt to address these issues in depth in Chapter 4 through reading Judith Bulter and Ricardo Rozzi. However, as I aim to offer her critique of modernity and that of earth and world alienation in the context of ecological crisis in this chapter, I intentionally try to read her work closely to offer her understanding first.

constitute the *vita activa*, the active life of humans.[159] From an immediate impression, one may assume that these are the qualities that define what humans are in an essential sense. However, Arendt describes humans as "conditioned beings" in an existential sense.[160] Arendt explains that these three activities are "fundamental because each corresponds to one of the basic conditions under which life on earth has been given to man."[161] For example, life is the condition of labor; worldliness is the condition of work; plurality is the condition of action. In other words, we are conditioned to labor to the extent that the earth gives us life; our arrival and departure as irreducible unique beings are conditioned by the existence of our common world; our political freedom is not given but conditioned by the collective actions of others.[162] Arendt shows that some of the conditions are not made by us but are given, while others are made out of collective, perhaps generational efforts both intended and unintended. Among these conditions, as Kelly Oliver puts it, the earth and world are two distinct conditions that contrast as given and made respectively,[163] and arguably such distinction is indispensable for us to make sense of our *doing* within our limits and possibilities, i.e., responsible living with others on the earth and in the world. In this section, I analyze each of Arendt's aspects of the *vita activa* with a focus on the

[159] In contrast to the *vita activa*, Arendt discusses the *vita contemplativa*, which is about contemplation. Arendt discusses that ancient Greek philosophers, like Plato and Aristotle, perceive the *vita activa* from the lens of the *vita contemplativa,* contrasting the former as unquiet and the latter as absolute quiet. For philosophers who associate their way of life in contemplation, the *vita activa*, or any earthly and worldly hassles like politics and mere necessity, appear to be inferior to contemplative (philosophical) life. Arendt notes that the fact Socrates was executed due to his political involvement was one of the decisive events that set the distance between philosophers and politics, leading to the hierarchy between the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa.* (According to Arendt, this hierarchy, the high value of the *vita contemplativa* is inherited by earlier Christianity as well.) Arendt's critical insight here is that this traditional hierarchy matters for us to understand the historicity of the *vita activa*: how the Western political thinkers misunderstood, blurred, and undermined the distinctive roles of the *vita activa* in our earthly and worldly living. See, Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 12–21.

[160] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 9

[161] Ibid., p. 7.

[162] Ibid., pp. 7–11.

[163] Kelly Oliver, *Earth and World: Philosophy after the Apollo Missions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), p. 85.

conditions of our earthly and worldly living.

### 3.2.1 Labor and Work

First, I focus on Arendt's distinction between labor and work to properly understand the relationality of each activity in their given spheres, the earth and the world, and how these spheres are distinguished. Arendt's notion of labor is derived from her conversation with and against her predecessor political theorists. Inheriting from Aristotle's distinction between political and biological life, Arendt explains that laboring is our way of sustaining our biological bodies, or life. For example, harvesting food for consumption is a form of labor, the motivation for which is driven by the necessity of life, i.e., "wants and needs."[164] Arendt describes this mode of human existence as *animal laborans*, the primary concern of which is the sustenance of biological life as an individual and species.[165] Our bodies grow and decay, as all life on the earth that also shares the life process.[166] We are all subject to our bodily existence and necessity, and for Arendt, this condition is what labor should be for, nothing more or less.

Drawing from the ancient Greek's view of nature as immortal,[167] Arendt perceives life (particularly that of species) as endlessness and cyclical process, and labor is not opposed to this cyclical nature of life, but rather enslaved (Arendt's word) to its endless recurrence.[168] To this extent, things we produce from our labor do not break from the cyclical process but are rather absorbed into the cyclical process of life; as there is no day that our metabolism willfully stops. Although Arendt problematizes Locke's and especially Marx's labor theory for "their equation

[164] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 30.

[165] Ibid., pp. 8, 22.

[166] Ibid., p. 7.

[167] Ibid., pp. 18–19.

[168] Ibid., pp. 7, 83–84, 105–9.

of work with labor,"[169] Arendt also finds Locke's and Marx's characterizations of labor helpful for grasping our relationality with laboring materials; she specifically notes Marx's description of labor as "men's metabolism with nature,"[170] as well as Locke's assertion that labor "bodily 'mixes with' the things provided by nature."[171] As Nicholas H. Smith (2019) helpfully interprets Arendt here, "the labour of the body is ontologically continuous with the natural material it mixes with, the mixing done by the labour serves merely to bring out a fecundity inheriting in the life process itself."[172] Given this endless and repetitive process of laboring, Arendt explains that ancient Greeks, for example, enslaved others as an attempt to liberate themselves from such burden.[173] Furthermore, Arendt points out Marx's misunderstanding of the condition of labor that liberating oneself from labor "will automatically nourish other 'higher' activities."[174] Such understanding induces a confusion because no matter how hard one labors or no matter how technology seems to reduce our immediate bodily labor, it cannot result in "changes in the basic condition of human life on earth."[175] That is, we are always subject to the life process and labor is not meant to break us from it. Labor conforms to the condition of our life on the earth, as "the earth is the very quintessence of the human condition."[176]

On the other hand, Arendt says that work is the necessary activity for the fabrication of the world in which humans come to exist beyond their mere biological life. The function of work, as opposed to labor, is to achieve and embody endurability and stability that mortal humans, as

[169]Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 102.

[170] Ibid., p. 98.

[171] Ibid., p. 100.

[172] Nicholas H. Smith, "Arendt's Anti-Humanism of Labour," *European Journal of Social Theory* 22, no. 2 (2019): 182.

[173] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 31, 119.

[174] Ibid., p. 133.

[175] Ibid., p. 121.

[176] Ibid., p. 2.

*animal laborans*, do not possess naturally.[177] For example, traditional craftworkers and artisans may represent this mode of engagement in the world by turning natural materials into houses, chairs, and tables, which can last a long time with appropriate care.[178] What role these worldly materials serve is twofold. One is, given their durability, that worldly objects can resist and endure the life of necessity, by giving "relative independence from men who produced and use them…and [from] the voracious needs and wants of their living makers and users."[179] Although worldly objects often serve the purpose of utility (such as the utility of a chair, which is to sit in during rest, study, eating, etc.), Arendt explains that worldly objects' independence from makers and users (the chair exists even when it is not used) constitute "objectivity" in things themselves and in the world.[180] This objectivity is what work, not labor, can bring into the world out of the eternal and cyclical cycle of nature:

> Only we who have erected the objectivity of a world of our own from what nature gives us, who have built it into the environment of nature so that we are protected from her, can look upon nature as something "objective." Without a world between man and nature, there is eternal movement, but not objectivity.[181]

At first glance, her explanation of the objectivity of a world appears to suggest the earth as something undesirable. However, the point here is not that work should replace the role of labor, or vice versa. As previously discussed, humans are all subject to the natural cycle of life, and that itself is a human condition; thus, labor is needed as we are earth-bound beings. I interpret that what she means by protection from nature is not so much about the literal sense of the natural environment, but more about the symbolic representation of ontological monism in nature—the

[177] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 7, 8

[178] Ibid., p. 136.

[179] Ibid., p. 137.

[180] Ibid.

[181] Ibid.

eternal cycle of nature. Although we as mortal beings are equally part of the natural cycle of life with the rest of life on the earth, Arendt perceives the importance of a worldly vantage point, which gives us a clear definitive sense of time, beginning and end, in our making.[182]

What Arendt sees in work but not labor is what Paul Ott (2009) describes as, "the objectification of objects qua objects."[183] That is, the ability to cognize, relate, and fabricate things as objects. Arendt explains as follows:

> It is only within the human world that nature's cyclical movement manifests itself as growth and decay…. Only when they enter the man-made world can nature's process be characterized by growth and decay; only if we consider nature's products, this tree or this dog, as individual things, thereby already removing them from their "natural" surroundings and putting them into our world, do they begin to grow and decay.[184]

What this means in a broader picture of Arendt's concern of "love of the world" is that not only does a tree need to enter into the world to become "this tree," but that this is ultimately the same for humans. The world, or our "appearance and disappearance" into the world is what makes humans individual and irreplaceable beings with their own life stories—none of our stories are ever the same.[185]

This leads to the second purpose of worldly materials, which is, by constructing the objectivity of the world, to grant the locus of shared meanings, understandings, or the common world. The common world is "the common meeting ground of all,"[186] where we can communicate with others and have common sense, as our life is "always rooted in a world of man and of man-made things" and "never leaves or altogether transcends."[187] This corresponds

[182] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 143–144.

[183] Paul Ott, "World and Earth: Hannah Arendt and the Human Relationship to Nature," *Ethics, Pace and Environment* 12, no. 1 (2009): 9.

[184] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 97–98.

[185] Ibid., p. 97.

[186] Ibid., p. 57.

[187] Ibid., p. 22.

to her emphasis on the Roman interpretation that "to live" existentially means "to be among men" and "death" means "to cease to be among men."[188] In other words, our life starts and ends with "not Man" in a singular omnipotence sense but "men" in plural sense. This plurality is, as Arendt states in *The Life of the Mind*, "one of the basic existential conditions of human life on earth."[189]

Thus, by objectivity of the world, Arendt does not mean a transcendental matter. For Arendt, worldly things and matters prevent us from being consumed into the cyclical power of natural current, like labor, and simultaneously prevents us from stumbling over each other. Arendt elaborates:

> To live together in the world means essentially that a world of things is between those who have it in common, as a table is located between those who sit around it; the world, like every in-between, relates and separates men at the same time."[190]

By standing physically between people, worldly objects, like a table, simultaneously help keep us apart and yet relate to each other. This gives us a worldly vantage point where we can perceive objects in common, and "out of which arise their specific, objective, worldly interests."[191] To this extent, Arendt distinguishes the affairs of *animal laborans* as private and those of *homo faber* as public, in order to keep individualistic immediate concerns driven by wants and needs apart from worldly, perhaps political affairs, which should concern more than one's personal interests.[192] I discuss the issues of the blurred boundary between private and public in later sections.

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[188] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 7–8.

[189] Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind: The Groundbreaking Investigation on How We Think*, ed. Mary McCarthy (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 1981), p. 74.

[190] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 52.

[191] Ibid., p. 182.

[192] Arendt's dichotomy between private and public is unsatisfactory from a view of critical gender analysis.

For Arendt, this in-betweenness of the world constitutes the condition of our plurality where each of us can appear as a being in the presence of others. Arendt explains that with the power of reification of the earth into the world, birth and death of humans can be distinguished from "simple natural occurrences" and become "worldly events" where each of us can appear to others as "single individuals, unique, unexchangeable, and unrepeatable entities."[193] To this extent, Arendt insists on distinguishing the mode of human existence in the world from that of the earth for the sake of granting space for plurality.

Arendt explains that the sustenance of the common world relies on plurality, or "the simultaneous presence of innumerable perspectives,"[194] and as Jerome Kohn notes, these innumerous perspectives inform "our vision through the vision of others, both living and dead."[195] The common world is not merely collectively built by those who are alive but also by generations of the dead. That said, taking care of the world does not just mean something like preserving worldly materials in museums. In "The Crisis of Education," Arendt argues that adults, particularly educators, have a responsibility toward children to introduce them into the world. Stephanie Mackler interprets Arendt's claim by saying that "giving a world to children" is not simply bestowing "cups and sculptures" to them.[196] Rather, what we are responsible for is the introduction of "a subset of the world… : the ideas, concepts, values, and narratives that unite us in common understanding, endowing human life with relative coherence and reliability."[197]

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[193] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 96–97.

[194] Ibid., p. 57.

[195] Elisabeth Young-Bruehl and Jerome Kohn, "What and How We learned from Hannah Arendt: An Exchange of Letters," in *Hannah Arendt and Education: Renewing Our Common World*, ed. Mordechai Gordon (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2001), pp. 251–52.

[196] Stephanie Mackler, "And Worldlessness, Alas, Is Always a Kind of Barbarism: Hannah Arendt and the Challenge of Education in Worldless Times," *Teachers College Record* 112, no. 2 (2010): 513.

[197] Mackler, "And Worldlessness, Alas, Is Always a Kind of Barbarism," *Teachers College Record* 112, no. 2 (2010): 513.

Likewise, Natasha Levinson argues that the world does not simply exist out there but has an "intersubjective dimension."[198] The ways we relate and engage with others in the world are part of such worldly education; thus *taking care* of the world is something to be fostered and it requires us "to participate with others in the collective shaping of the world."[199] For Arendt, this participation can be realized in the modes of speech and action, which I explain in the following section.

So far, I have shown how Arendt's dichotomy between labor and work corresponds to the earth and the world. For Arendt, the earth symbolizes our bodily condition of life on the earth, and the world symbolizes our worldly condition of plural existence. The reason why this distinction is important for her is precisely to remind us that the world is our *making,* not a given, of work but not labor. And yet, neither work nor labor are supposed to replace each other. As Arendt describes that "men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world,"[200] we are always already conditioned both in the earth and world. For Arendt, both earthly and worldly living are necessary conditions of our existence and are achieved and maintained through the activities of labor and work.

### 3.2.2 Action

Although labor and work correspond to the conditions of our earthly and worldly living, Arendt argues that they alone are insufficient to achieve political life. As previously mentioned, Arendt considers that *homo faber* can erect objectivity in the world through fabricating worldly objects, which is the necessary condition for the common world—the space for plurality.

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[198] Natasha Levinson, "A 'More General Crisis': Hannah Arendt, World-Alienation, and the Challenges of Teaching for the World *As It Is*," *Teachers College Record* 112, no. 2 (2010): 467.

[199] Levinson, "A 'More General Crisis'," p. 477.

[200] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 7.

However, ultimately although worldly objects constitute *space* by laying between us, they do not constitute human plurality itself. Drawing from Aristotle, Arendt considers that the political life of humans should be actualized through action and speech of *bios politikos*, not the work of *homo faber.*[201] This is because the disposition of *homo faber* is the fabrication of things, and the intention of such creation is for utility—creating things as a means to serve an end. Arendt's concern here is the meaninglessness or "the instrumentalization of the whole world and the earth" through the hands and lens of *homo faber*. [202] That is, the utilitarian nature of *homo faber* cannot ground the value of things intrinsically beyond the circle of means and ends. Putting this into the context of her analysis of totalitarianism, Arendt warns that "masses of people are continuously rendered superfluous if we continue to think of our world in utilitarian terms."[203]

Ultimately, Arendt contends that politics, through which freedom and equality is pursued, cannot be achieved strictly in a utilitarian sense.

In response to this, Arendt explains that action and speech are the only political actions, which are constituted in our condition of natality, or ability to initiate new beginnings. [204] As the term suggests, *natality* refers to birth, and Arendt interprets "the birth of new men" as "the birth of new beginning."[205] Coming to exist in the world through birth is a precondition of any of the *vita activa*, and each birth always gives newness or uniqueness to the world. Given that, Arendt grasps natality as an ability to initiate new beginnings, and that is where "the faculty of action is ontologically rooted."[206] Through speech and action, we disclose ourselves into the world, "like

[201] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 7, 25.

[202] Ibid., p. 157.

[203] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 459.

[204] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 177–78.

[205] Ibid., p. 247.

[206] Ibid.

a second birth,"[207] and what unfolds from such arrival is always "unexpected" as one can perform "what is infinitely improbable" by the virtue of natality.[208] This unpredictability of action and speech also differs from work, as work is done with a clear intention and outcome in mind whereas "action has no end."[209] Due to this lack of controllability, another aspect of action and speech is irreversibility. As opposed to a self-sufficient view of autonomy, Arendt conceives the fact that we cannot undo things we have initiated is what makes freedom possible. Freedom for Arendt lies in the ability to initiate anew (i.e., natality) even if what would be brought from the initiation is uncontrollable and irreversible to the initiator; it does not lay in the ability to control of one's doing, like a *homo faber*.[210]

As Canovan notes, Arendt's intention of political theory is to ground her political theory in pluralism, in order to oppose her predecessors in political theory, which tends to depict a human as "an abstract subject that existed only in the singular" in their theories.[211] Arendt explains that the tradition of Western philosophy, such as in Plato, has tendencies to withdraw from the world of political reality (un-quiet) in the pursuit of the truth, which was often thought to appear only in the absolute quiet, [212] or "outside the plurality of men."[213] Descartes follows the same approach to the extent that instead of seeking certainty among peers, he turns to himself, specifically to his mind.[214] Although Marx does not concern himself with certainty or truth like Plato and Descartes do, Arendt condemns Marx's view of humans as *animal laborans* for

[207] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 176.

[208] Ibid., p. 178.

[209] Ibid., p. 233.

[210] Ibid., pp. 230–36.

[211] Canovan, *Hannah Arendt*, p. 130.

[212] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 14–21; Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, p. 6.

[213] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 20.

[214] Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, pp. 47, 150; Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 280-81.

undermining the pluralistic understanding of history, action, and politics, because such an understanding renders the view that everything that happened and ought to happen would be justified as an inevitable *process* of social and natural cycles. To this extent, Arendt sees the danger of totalitarianism in Marx's philosophy. [215]

How Arendt distinguishes herself from others is precisely in that the condition of politics is plurality but not in isolation, stating that "action, as distinguished from fabrication is never possible in isolation."[216] This is because her understanding of political agency is always situated in the innumerable web of human relationships:

> The realm of human affairs, strictly speaking, consists of the web of human relationships which exists whenever men live together. The disclosure of the "who" through speech, and the setting of a new beginning through action, always falls into an already existing web where their immediate consequences can be felt. Together they start a new process which eventually emerges as the unique life story of the newcomer, affecting uniquely the life stories of all those with whom he comes into contact.[217]

This understanding of a life story as woven in a web clarifies the fact that Arendt's account of agency is always conditioned in plurality, as politics relies on the presence of others—being seen and heard from each unique perspective in the web of relationships. This locus of disclosure in the web is called a space of appearance, which, according to Arendt, is enacted when people engage collectively in the manner of speech and action. [218] The space of appearance is the basis of the public realm, and the enactment of such political space does not rely on any existing associations, such as nationality or religions, but solely on action and speech—the birth right of human natality. Drawing from the ancient Greek, Arendt distinguishes the public sphere from the

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[215] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 45, 89, 116. See also Chapter 3 "Totalitarian elements in Marxism" in Canovan's *Hannan Arendt* for more detailed analysis of how Arendt perceives the seeds of totalitarianism in Marx's philosophy. Canovan, *Hannah Arendt*, Chap. 3.

[216] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 188.

[217] Ibid., pp. 183–84.

[218] Ibid., p. 199.

private on the basis of the different relationality that each sphere upholds. She associates the private sphere with home, *oikia*, where kinship binds families and household necessity is taken care of. The public sphere, on the other hand, is the space for equality, in which no domination or violence should take place either by others or oneself. [219] For Arendt, political life is actualized through the exchange of speech and deeds (not violence) with other peers in the public realm, distinguishing it from the private realm where satisfying the necessities through labor is the dominant concern. Being-together in the public space consists in the very fact that no one can choose "whom [one] reveals when [one] discloses [one]self in deed or word," and thus one "must be willing to risk the disclosure."[220] This means that action and speech always initiate a chance for unknown, unexpected outcomes regardless of the original intentions. Thus, Arendt finds political virtue when one willingly takes the risk of this uncontrolled disclosure of oneself in the presence of others in the public realm.[221] As Emma Ingala puts it, Arendt's political theory establishes an "irreducible plurality" in which any person can distinguish themselves through their speech and action in the presence of others and never be devised into a homogenized political body.[222]

In sum, Arendt's conception of the *vita activa* seems to carefully examine and question the earthly, worldly, and political *conditions* of living with others in plurality. Each activity of the *vita activa* has a distinct meaning in a given sphere and shows a distinct way to relate to things, such as body, materials, and others. Life on the earth is given, the world needs to be collectively made with care, and yet our life in this world is unpredictable. For Arendt, we

[219] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 24, 26, 28, 30–31, 175.

[220] Ibid., p. 180.

[221] Ibid., p. 36.

[222] Emma Ingala, "From Hannah Arendt to Judith Butler: The Conditions of the Political," in *Subjectivity and the Political: Contemporary Perspectives*, eds. Gavin Rae and Emma Ingala (New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 37.

should embrace each of the conditions, even when they are a burden to us.

### 3.2.3 Worldlessness: The Rise of the Social

Through examining the *vita activa* in depth, we see Arendt's careful ways to set boundaries of each activity and its related realm. As Oliver describes Arendt as "the philosopher of limits,"[223] Arendt lays out how such limits are important for the actualization of plurality through earthly and worldly living. In this section, I focus on her concerns of the blurred boundaries of the *vita activa* and the private and the public, which leads to worldlessness in the emergence of "laboring society."[224] This section allows us to question what happens when the conditions of our earthly and worldly cohabitation are ignored, misunderstood, and destroyed.

One of the major critiques Arendt makes in *The Human Condition* is the blurred understanding among labor, work, and action in the modern age, which she argues brought two important consequences: "reversal of traditions" and "glorification of labor as the source of all values."[225] Arendt argues this reversal is partly owed to the tradition of political philosophers, such as Plato, who valued contemplation above other activities so much that the distinctions of *vita activa* was ignored altogether. Such ignorance was so severe that that "even political activity was leveled to the rank of necessity."[226] For Arendt, although modernity was not the origin of this blurred distinction,[227] the modern age was its hallmark to the extent that the lowly activity of labor made it to the top of the human condition by political philosophers.

For example, Arendt explains that Locke and Smith are notable examples of political

[223] Oliver, *Earth and World*, p. 100.

[224] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 4.

[225] Ibid., p. 85.

[226] Ibid., p. 85

[227] Ibid., pp. 14, 17.

thinkers in the modern age who valued labor as an unlimited source of property and wealth through the lens of productivity. As labor symbolizes the endlessness of life process, Arendt sees how these theorists who are concerned with the science of growing wealth and property, i.e., economy, chose labor over work and action.[228] However, she condemns particularly Marx for blending the attributes of work (productivity) and action (uniqueness) into labor, [229] which resulted in reconfiguring labor as "the expression of the very humanity of man" in the modern age.[230] For Arendt, Marx's view of humans as *animal laborans* instead of *animal rationale* appears to be his rebellion against the Western tradition. She summarizes Marx's thought as arguing that "labor (and not God) created man [and] . . . labor (and not reason) distinguished man from the other animals . . . ."[231] Although some scholars have already questioned and analyzed the accuracy of Arendt's reading of Marx,[232] what Arendt ultimately tries to critique in Marx is his neglect of the objective world, deriving this point from his dialectic analysis that focuses on *process.* In "On Needing Both Marx and Arendt," Jennifer Ring gives a helpful account of how both Arendt and Marx each respond differently to the objective world through the lens of materialism:

> Both thinkers are trying to "claim" the material world. Marx's dialectical methodology, however, leads him inevitably to think in terms of process so that the material world upon which he grounds his political theory cannot be regarded as static or even stable. From the perspective of Marx's methodology, the stability Arendt seeks in the material world is illusion. Perhaps Arendt would argue that the very possibility of dialectical method with its eternally clashing and dissolving borders could have arisen only *in response to* a world

[228] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 101, 105.

[229] Canovan, *Hannah Arendt*, pp. 71–75.

[230] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 101.

[231] Ibid., p. 86.

[232] Christopher Holman, "Dialectics and Distinction: Reconsidering Hannah Arendt's Critique of Marx," *Contemporary Political Theory* 10 (2011): 332–53; Gupta Dipankar, "Misreading *Capital*: The Making of Weber, Arendt, and Friedman," *Focaal* 84 (2019): 91–108; Waseem Yaqoob, "Reconciliation and Violence: Hannah Arendt on Historical Understanding," *Modern Intellectual History* 11, no. 2 (2014): 385–416.

in which permanence had already begun to lose its importance.[233]

What this suggests is that Arendt grants the condition of humanity upon the existence of a durable world, whereas Marx, given his critique of the exploitation of workers in capitalism, grants the condition of *humanization* of labors upon the liberation of the working class via "worker's conscious control over production and creation that can make labor a 'human' activity, regardless of what is produced."[234] That is, as Ring's analysis shows, Marx's theory in the eyes of Arendt dangerously employs the life process of *animal laborans* as the lens to understand the experience of class struggle in historical context, *and* it promotes that the control over the life process (i.e., the mode of labor production), but not plurality or the common world, should be the dominant social discourse for freedom. Arendt, who experienced a totalitarian regime as a stateless person, could not resist but to see the danger of Marxist focus on labor as the locus and concern of politics, undermining the distinctions of the *vita activa*, or the conditions of plural existence in the earth and world.

Arendt argues that modernity symbolizes the loss of the world through "the emancipation of the laboring activity" from the private realm, where consumption is the dominant concern.[235] This emancipation corresponds to what Arendt calls "the rise of the social," which is a sort of invasion of the household affairs into the public discourse, such as economics, health, and consumption.[236] For Arendt, the advent of consumer society in the modern world is a quintessential phenomenon of laboring society, where people as *animal laborans* are no longer sure how to take care of the worldly materials but start "treating all use objects as though they

[233] Jennifer Ring, "On Needing Both Marx and Arendt: Alienation and the Flight from Inwardness," *Political Theory* 17, no. 3 (1989): 437.

[234] Ring, "On Needing Both Marx and Arendt," p. 444.

[235] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 126.

[236] Ibid., pp. 33, 38.

were consumer goods, so that a chair or a table is now consumed as rapidly as a dress and a dress used up almost as quickly as food."[237] Our current discourse of sustainability may also appear to Arendt as a struggle of the worldlessness of our time.

However, the loss of the world does not simply mean that the world has vanished from our sight, like we consumed up everything. As we know, our society is filled with artificial stuff, and the stuff our consumer society produces, which used to be in the category of work, is treated like consumer goods. However, these goods cannot easily be consumed in a biological sense, like plastic, and even this traditional consumptive stuff, like food, fails to be properly consumed in the cycle of nature but is instead disposed of, while a good percentage of the world population still does not have safe access to the basic necessities, such as clean water and food. This mirrors Arendt's description of society, or "unnatural growth of the natural," in which labor far out-produces our consumptive abilities.[238]

Arendt also links the rise of the social with the loss of political significance. Given the loss of the world, Arendt argues that people are expected to behave (not act) as part of the mass or mob—a homogeneous unit in mass society. As opposed to the public realm where there is no prerequisite agreement, Arendt writes that the social realm builds on particular interests and associations of the members. In other words, strong social conformism becomes the condition of the participation for politics. In the same vein, Arendt points out the rise of social science in the modern age, which tends to suggest that people are predictable according to "laws" in each discipline of study, such as behavioral science, which "aim[s] to reduce man as a whole, in all his activities, to the level of a conditioned and behaving animal."[239] For those who fail to meet the

[237] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 124.

[238] Ibid., p. 47.

[239] Ibid., p. 45.

"standard" behavior as social beings, then the translation of such behavior will likely be understood as abnormal.[240]

Returning to her concerns of the love of the world, the blurred distinction of the *vita activa* and that of the public and private lead to worldlessness in modernity. In such a condition, we ultimately fail "the task of renewing a common world."[241] Her analysis asks what would be left when this laboring society also aims to eliminate labor through automation, to consume up the world which gives us the common ground to form common interests and reality with others, and to reduce the significance of action and speech to the level of mass behavior, which fails to distinguish oneself and others in the irreducible plurality. The crisis of worldlessness brings homelessness and superfluousness—the loss of the stable world for plurality.

### 3.3 The Other Side of Modernity: Earth Alienation and World Alienation

In the previous sections, we see how Arendt describes the earth and world differently in her understanding of the existential conditions for our irreducible plurality and how the blurred distinctions of the *vita activa* and the private and the public in the modern age ground her claim for the loss of such conditions—worldlessness. However, her critique of modernity does not end there. In the prologue of *The Human Condition*, Arendt expresses the "perplexities"[242] that contemporary technocratic society wishes to *liberate* us from our fundamental condition of earth-boundedness, even though we are always already earth-bound beings. This liberation, for Arendt, is better understood as alienation, being uprooted from the conditions of earthly and worldly

[240] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 42. Also, Natasha Levinson brings this point into conversation with Foucauldian analyses, suggesting that it is not so much that society as an external force totalizes abnormality, but that people internalize the standardized behaviors. See Levinson, "A 'More General Crisis'," p. 480.

[241] Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, with an introduction by Jerome Kohn (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), p. 193.

[242] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 5.

living, or our situated cohabitation. Furthermore, this is complexified by the fact that, according to Arendt, we are nothing but *animal laborans* due to the rise of laboring society; that is, the significance of action and speech has been lost.[243]

What Arendt sees in the event of *Sputnik* is a perplexing glimpse of human natality. As previously mentioned, Arendt considers that each of us has the ability to initiate unexpected beginnings by virtue of birth. In this sense, the launch of *Sputnik* in the hope for "escape from men's imprisonment to the earth"[244] seems to be derived from the unexpectedness of human natality, regardless of its outcomes. However, in light of her political theory, the point of natality is to ensure the grounds for action in *plurality*. That is, the presence of irreducible plural perspectives in the world is what makes one's arrival (through one's action and speech) in the world unique.[245] Arendt's concern with modernity is precisely about the reduction of plural perspectives into a homogeneous mass through instituting a more predictable and controllable world. As Stephanie Meckler points out, the launch of *Sputnik* was an event that disclosed technological development in modernity, which wants to eliminate "the uncontrollable, unpredictable, and unknown,"[246] leading to the fully "controlled human-made 'world' that Arendt would call a *nonworld*."[247] Arendt considers that this technological development symbolizes this perplexity of modernity, which aims to alter and transcend at its will the conditions of earthbound-worldly creatures even if such transcendence is self-defeating.[248] In this section, I analyze earth and world alienation, which she describes as a "twofold flight from

[243] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 4–5.

[244] Ibid., p. 1.

[245] Ibid., p. 57.

[246] Mackler, "And Worldlessness, Alas, Is Always a Kind of Barbarism," p. 522.

[247] Ibid., p. 524. Emphasis added.

[248] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 1–5.

the earth into the universe and from the world into the self, "[249] in order to elaborate on Arendt's critique of modernity. By doing so, as discussed in Chapter 2, we can see the historicity of antianthropocentrism and what this implies in ecological crisis.

In her analysis of earth and world alienation, Arendt emphasizes that there are three historical events that shaped the course of the modern age. One of the three is what Arendt calls "the discovery of America," in which "the immensity of available space on earth was discovered" through new technical developments in mapping and charting.[250] What this brought is, however, "the famous shrinkage of the globe," through the act of surveying itself.[251] What shrank is distance, as it became manageable through the use of speed; how fast it takes to reach a destination is now a more meaningful question than how far away the destination is.[252] Arendt discusses that conquering distance is an important element of surveying, as follows:

> It is the nature of the human surveying capacity that it can function only if man disentangles himself from all involvement in and concern with the close at hand and withdraws himself to a distance from everything near him. The greater the distance between himself and his surroundings, world or earth, the more he will be able to survey and to measure and the less will worldly, earth-bound space be left to him.[253]

That is, more and more, one can become detached and distanced from one's immediate surroundings, and then one can get closer to grasping the objective data of things. The process of withdrawal from human sense perception to objectivity implies that abstractness is valued as accuracy. This scientific notion of objectivity differs from Arendt's account of objectivity that is erected by the hands of *homo faber*. Objectivity for Arendt means that the stable world lies in between us to create a worldly vantage point from where we can see the common thing from

[249] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 6.

[250] Ibid., p. 250.

[251] Ibid.

[252] Ibid., p. 250.

[253] Ibid., p. 251.

each of our unique perspectives; objectivity for Arendt is not like the modern scientific understanding of a transcendental view from nowhere but it is the very condition of how we form our common interests between us. In other words, Arendt's objectivity needs to be accompanied by the partiality of our views, whereas scientific objectivity needs to denounce partiality for impartiality. Paradoxically, the world that is reconstructed with such sense-and-value-free data of modern science may appear to be "more real" than "the world we live in."[254] As the quote above implies, the issue is that the distance that is required for this type of survey alienates those who survey from both the world and earth, even though these are the conditions for our irreducible plurality. As discussed through Donna Haraway in Chapter 2, such scientific objectivism obscures the locality of gaze and pretends to be from nowhere, even though being nowhere is a very act of being everywhere for "the interest of unfettered power."[255]

The second event that shaped the modern age is the expropriation of church property due to the Reformation, which resulted in the individual expropriation of land and the creation of the possible condition for the accumulation of social wealth.[256] Arendt explains that property, prior to this expropriation, was "no more or less than to have one's location in a particular part of the world."[257] Generationally passed down place allows peasants to have stability; however, by losing it, "they were turned into day laborers entirely absorbed in the struggle to satisfy their bodily needs."[258] Peg Birmingham contributes here an important reading of Arendt's analysis of expropriation and the production of superfluous people:

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[254] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 261.

[255] Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 581.

[256] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 248, 254–256; Margaret Canovan, Introduction to *The Human Condition,* by Hannah Arendt (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. xiii.

[257] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 61.

[258] Canovan, Introduction to *The Human Condition*, p. xiii.

> Arendt argues that the process of expropriation not only marks the beginning of the "monstrous process of accumulation" but continues to animate the process as it picks up increasing force with the political emancipation of the bourgeoisie, whose desire for unlimited acquisition and accumulation moves imperialist politics from the nation state to the global stage, producing thousands of politically and economically superfluous human beings.[259]

This aligns with the colonial expansion and shrinkage of the world, through which colonized countries and regions tend to experience severe economic and political injustice wherein the local residents, such as indigenous people, are uprooted from their land and homes for the wealth of colonial nation-states and corporations, as discussed in Chapter 2. Ecological crisis includes the struggle against the violent act of uprooting people from the land.

The third event, which is the most significant for Arendt, is Galileo's telescopic discoveries, which enabled the astrophysical world view that views the earth (as well as nature and human beings) as part of the laws of the universe from the outside of the earth, and applies such cosmic laws back onto the earth.[260] Arendt explains that the discovery of a standpoint located outside the earth in the universe, or the Archimedean point, is what "modern natural science owes its great triumphs," as it makes it possible to perceive the earth from the outside.[261] The telescope made this Archimedean point, not by mere imagination but by a tool. Arendt explains that this event of Galileo signifies another reversal of tradition from ancient philosophy, since the product of work (the telescope), rather than contemplation, "finally forced nature, or rather the universe, to yield its secrets,"[262] as opposed to the notion of truth as self-revelation.[263] This forcefulness or violence is part of the relationship between *homo faber,* who Arendt calls a

[259] Peg Birmingham, "Superfluity and Precarity: Reading Arendt Against Butler," *Philosophy Today* 62, no. 2 (2018): 324.

[260] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 261–63.

[261] Ibid., p. 11.

[262] Ibid., p. 290.

[263] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 31.

"destroyer of nature," [264] and nature, whose natural recurrence *homo faber* must disrupt for production.

This reversal reflects "the mistrust of the given"[265] in modern science, in which it is believed that our bodily and earthly, or anthropocentric and geocentric, conditions cannot adequately perceive objective truth, but rather lead to deception. Arendt claims that the rise of *homo faber* in modern science lies in the needs of experiments, in which understanding the *process* of fabricating, that is the question of "how" instead of why we produce, becomes the utmost importance, as the process is understood as how a thing comes into being.[266] This "how" is pursued from the standpoint outside the earth, and is applied back into things as if anything, such as nature, is "potentially man-made,"[267] even if such process is violent. [268] However, Arendt argues that what this *initiation* of process makes possible does not lie in our activity of work but lies in our ability of action, which has the nature of unpredictability and irreversibility. What Arendt draws attention to here is modern science's infusion of action into work, which she describes as "the great dangers of acting in the mode of making."[269] In other words, the mixture of action and work initiates something (process) with the confidence of absolute control—as if everything is possible. However, what Arendt precisely warns is that there is a limit in action; we cannot control the outcome and undo the things we initiated through action:

> Modern natural science and technology, which no longer observe or take material from or imitate processes of nature but seem actually to act into it, seem, by the same token, to have carried irreversibility and human unpredictability into the natural realm, where no

[264] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 139.

[265] Ibid., p. 298.

[266] Ibid., p. 295.

[267] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 89.

[268] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 295–97

[269] Ibid., p. 238.

remedy can be found to undo what has been done.[270]

For Arendt, activating the process by which *homo faber* fabricated into nature symbolizes the beginning of modern world, as seen in the example of the atomic engineer.[271] Irreversible change into the earth where all life is always conditioned is certainly problematic, as our society is currently witnessing numerous ecological consequences from such irreversible actions into nature.

Arendt argues that the distrust of our given anthropocentric and geocentric conditions in modern science is what leads to earth alienation of modernity. Alienation from earth is an act of uprooting in order to acquire the no-*body*'s perspective anywhere in the universe. When people apply "cosmic laws as guiding principles for terrestrial action," [272] arguably such actions seem to be literally out of place—unsituated. This is the reason why Arendt describes one of the phenomena of alienation as "flight from the earth into the universe."[273] In such a condition, we act like "dwellers of the universe,"[274] who can think, act, and move freely "in terms of the universe while remaining on the earth,"[275] while disregarding the given conditions of our earthly and worldly existence.[276] This alienation refers to not only ontological and epistemological alienation from the earth as earth-bound creatures, but arguably also from ethics as earth-bound creatures. As discussed in Chapter 2, anti-anthropocentrism, or alienation from the fundamental conditions of our bodily and earthly existence challenges the very possibility of ethics.

Furthermore, another significance of the discoveries of Galileo's telescope is that this

[270] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 238.

[271] Ibid., p. 6.

[272] Ibid., p. 264.

[273] Ibid., p. 6.

[274] Ibid., p. 3.

[275] Ibid., p. 264.

[276] Ibid., p. 261–63.

universal standpoint of the Archimedean point became available to the sense perception of our earthly beings, despite the realization of the limits of bodily sense-perception for receiving truth.[277] That is, the telescope made it possible for *any-body* to *perceive* the secrets of the planet; the telescope becomes the lens of the universalized viewpoint that is readily translatable to our human sense experience. The viewpoint is literally universal as it "must be comprehensible to the point of imitation by somebody who is able to occupy the same location."[278] As I discussed before, the existence of the plurality of perspectives is the precondition of uniqueness, that "being seen and being heard by others derive their significance from the fact that everybody sees and hears from a different position."[279] Thus, this idea and implementation of a unified perspective threatens the plurality of our common world.

Needless to say, such ambition for a universal viewpoint is already contradictory given the fact that we are always embodied earthly beings. Arendt articulates this by quoting Franz Kafka, who says of humans that "he found the Archimedean point, but he used it against himself"; the ironical point being that "it seems that he was permitted to find it only under this condition."[280] That is, given this earthly condition, Arendt points out that even when an astronaut goes into space, one will be unlikely to see "anything but [one]self and man-made things," even though one "wishes to eliminate all anthropocentric considerations from [one's] encounter with the non-human world around [the astronaut]."[281] Due to the modern recipe of knowledge—we can only be certain of things that we can recreate—the willful renunciation of anthropocentric and geocentric conditions for objectivity does not lead anywhere but back to the conditions in

[277] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 260.

[278] Ibid., p. 269.

[279] Ibid., p. 57.

[280] Quoted in Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 248.

[281] Arendt, *Between Past and Future,* p. 272.

which our life is sustained.

Arendt argues that this dilemma of earth-bound beings' quest for objectivity corresponds to the rise of Cartesian doubt through which philosophy is alienated not only from the earth but from the common world. Descartes, who put *everything* in doubt, including any experiences derived from bodily sense-perceptions and common-sense knowledge (perhaps also the tradition), famously sought certainty first in his existence. Nothing is able to escape from Cartesian doubt, and if everything is doubtful, the activity of doubting cannot be assurance of reality, but only of the doubting self.[282] In this sense, Arendt explains that the Archimedean point, the view outside the earth for universality, has to be brought down to this *doubting* self where certainty is derived from; that is, this is not a return to earth-bound sensual beings, but specifically to the inner conscious activity of mind. What this radical distrust of everything brought in the Cartesian doubt is introspection. The certainty no longer found out there in the world nor in space, but only found in the consciousness of the self. This radical shift in sense-making location from the world into the self is another aspect of world alienation,[283] in which what binds us together is not the world, but "the structure of [our] minds" are only thing that may remain as the common.[284] In this sense, along with the loss of stable worldliness through the rise of social, what this distrust of our shared common world through the Cartesian radical doubt brings about, for Arendt, is the vulnerable lonely mass population of modernity who lose the ways in which they can keep touch of a common sense reality and thus become more susceptible to a delusional world, failing to withstand against ideological movements such as totalitarianism.[285]

Importantly, Arendt uses the term *anthropocentric* to signify that we are sensual

[282] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 279–80.

[283] Ibid., pp. 272, 306.

[284] Ibid., p. 283; Canovan, *Hannah Arendt*, p. 151.

[285] Ibid., p. 257; ibid., pp. 91–93, 114.

embodied beings; what we see and understand is inseparable from our bodily conditions. For Arendt, to be anthropocentric is to affirm our bodily conditions and *limits* in our quest for knowledge, not to say that we are the highest beings in the sense of normative anthropocentrism.[286] To this extent, Arendt indicates that modern science, which involves in alienation from earth and world, is free from "all such anthropocentric, that is, truly humanistic, concerns."[287] This is because Arendt understands that our understandings, experiences, meanings, and common sense are derived from our bodily and earthly conditions.[288] While her political theory is certainly centered around humanistic concerns, she helps us to see how it is even possible for us to have humanistic concerns in the first place by carefully showing each of the conditions of our mortal, earth-bound existence. Thus, Arendt criticizes the negation of perceptual anthropocentric conditions of our life and world, as it actually means the negation of humanity itself.[289] That is, there seems to be a vital link between affirming sense perception and co-constituting our common world.

Jerome Kohn provides very insightful analysis of two alienations in the light of Adolf Eichmann as follows:

> What Arendt probably did not know is that Adolf Eichmann, when asked by the Israeli police why he changed his mind about the murderous, world-destructive racist ideology whose logic he carried out to the letter during World War II, replied: 'To tell the truth, it took a rocket landing on the moon. From then on, a radical change went on inside me.' Eichmann's past had become as distant from him as the moon, which puts in a nutshell what Arendt means by the human crisis of world- and earth-alienation.[290]

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[286] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 260; Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 157; David Macauley, "Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Place: From Earth Alienation to *Oikos*," in *Minding Nature: The Philosophers of Ecology*, ed. David Macauley (New York: The Guilford Press, 1996), p. 123.

[287] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 260.

[288] Ibid., pp. 266–67.

[289] Ibid., p. 274.

[290] Jerome Kohn, Introduction to *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, by Hannah Arendt (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), p. xvi. Eichmann's quote within Kohn's quote is found at: *Eichmann Interrogated*, ed. J. von Land, trans. R. Manheim (Toronto: Lester and Orpen dennys, 1983), p. 281.

As the word *radical* derives from the meaning of "root" *radix* in Latin, Eichmann seemed to remove the root that connects us to the earth by launching into the Moon. If this rootedness is a condition for us to co-constitute our common world where we partake in meaning-making, the radical removal, or alienation from the earth is certainly dangerous.

What alienation from the earth and followingly from the world brought about seems to be crisis for situated cohabitation—we can no longer be sure how we can live together on the earth and in the world. As I discussed in Chapter 2, Donna Haraway makes a very important point that scientific objectivity—being nowhere—is actually equivalent to the attempt to be everywhere in the hopes of searching for "translation, convertibility, mobility of meanings, and universality."[291] Following Haraway, the multiplicity of perspectives of the world is reduced and squeezed into one standardized and universal language. Arendt calls out such replacement of language (and therefore speech) as devoid of meaningfulness.[292] Scientific objectivity is as problematic as relativism because in equalizing our positioning, we fail to account for where we stand, see, and speak.[293]

Arguably, alienation from the earth and the world, and the link between them helps us to understand our ecological crisis. As Arendt discusses in *The Life of the Mind*, the commonality among all living beings is "to live in a world that preceded one's own arrival and will survive one's own departure."[294] Our ecological crisis cannot certainly take this constant flow of arrival and departure of species as granted. Rather, it is problematic to believe that species eternally thrive effortlessly. As we know, our arrival into and departure from this world is absolutely not due to mere effort of our own species by itself, and we certainly cannot come to exist without

[291] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," p. 580.

[292] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 274.

[293] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," p. 583.

[294] Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, p. 20.

many earthly factors. There are numerous forms of interdependency in our earthly and worldly existence, which I discuss later in Chapter 4.

## 3.4 Conclusion: Ecological Crisis

About sixty years after *Sputnik*, Paul Crutzen famously named our new geological era as the Anthropocene, which signifies the dominant influence and impact of human activities in geology and ecology that arguably exceed and alter natural cycles.[295] What signifies the Anthropocene is that a significant amount of human artificial things, such as toxic chemicals and plastics, have made their way *into* the geological record and have exceedingly disrupted and disturbed the natural cycle. A recent article also claimed that microplastics were found in human placenta.[296] Although every instance of contamination may not be intentional, the Anthropocene reflects Arendt's analysis of "acting into nature," as the earth is more and more filled with artificial materials to the level that the earth "for the first time ha[s been] taken…into the human world."[297]

While I am not here to deny the importance of scientific contributions in mitigating our ecological crisis *per se,* from our previous reading of Arendt, the remarks of Crutzen evokes Arendt's critiques of modern technology and science:

> A daunting task lies ahead for scientists and engineers to guide society towards environmentally sustainable management during the era of the Anthropocene. This will require appropriate *human behavior at all scales*, and may well involve internationally accepted, large-scale geo-engineering projects, for instance to 'optimize' climate."[298]

The quote suggests that the survival of our human species or the fate of this planet itself seems to

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[295] Paul J. Crutzen, "Geology of Mankind," *Nature* 415, no. 23 (2002): 23.

[296] Antonio Ragusa et al., "Plasticenta: First Evidence of Microplastics in Human Placenta," *Environment International* 146 (2021): 1–8.

[297] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 60.

[298] Crutzen, "Geology of Mankind," p. 23. Emphasis added.

lie in *management* by a few groups of specialists such as scientists and engineers, but not in the plurality of people. The fact that these specialists (and perhaps *any-body*) are technologically advanced enough to grasp the earth from the outside (e.g., satellite) and to apply the knowledge back into the earth to engineer the earth certainly reminds us of the Archimedean standpoint that Arendt critiques. Moreover, such management calls for a shift from human actions to mere human behavior on a mass scale. By applying the Archimedean point onto ourselves, as Arendt says, our existences will be reduced into something like a "behaving animal."[299] This is exactly why Arendt critiques the scientific triumph of the Archimedean standpoint; acquiring this god-like position—seeing from far above—undermines the condition of plurality.

However, Arendt's critique of modernity is likewise not anti-scientific nor anti-technological development. Due to blurred tradition and the radical alienation from earth and world together, the problem for Arendt is that we will "forever be unable to understand . . . to think and speak about things which nevertheless we are able to do."[300] In other words, the concern is the inability to address things politically even though the things at stake are affecting our fundamental conditions of plurality. Arendt clearly warns that such scientific and technological developments should be a political question for the people but not technocrats.[301]

Although, as discussed in Chapter 2, Arendt does not directly address ecological crisis *per se*, her careful analysis of the *vita activa* and modernity can provide a novel insight into it. What I draw from Arendt is that being earth-bound is not a trivial matter, but it should be the condition for our inquiry (including scientific and philosophical), ethics, and politics. Acknowledging that we are always already earth-bound beings is one of the indispensable ways

[299] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 45.

[300] Ibid., p. 3.

[301] Ibid., p. 3.

to take care of the common-meeting ground of the world. The challenge is that although we are always already earth-bound, it is not the case that we *inherently* know how to live on the earth. As Arendt says that we "live on the earth and inhabit the world,"[302] we also need the world, which consists of generational experience and knowledge of making the earth our home. I interpret this to mean that we have to learn to live on the earth and in the world. In Chapter 4, I address how our ecological crisis consists of the loss of the world, as seen in the homogenization of the diverse biocultural knowledge through globalization, destruction of traditions, generational experience and knowledge of living in the land, such as traditional ecological knowledge (TEK).

[302] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 7.

# CHAPTER 4

# CRIMES AGAINST THE EARTH: THROUGH ARENDT, BUTLER, AND ROZZI

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter is aimed at expanding the ecological reading of Hannah Arendt's political theory through analysis of Judith Butler and Ricardo Rozzi, in order to address the social and ecological conditions of plurality, Arendt's central political concept. In the previous chapters, I showed that Arendt's analysis of earth and world alienation offers a rich perspective on the ecological crisis through examining the conditions of living together with others on the earth and in the world. Arendt contends that earth alienation, the denial of human earthly and bodily condition for the pursuit of a universal standpoint, paves the way for modern science to conquer the earth. Furthermore, in the pursuit of objectivity, modern science undermines the common world, which is the locus of our shared meanings, understandings, and common sense; world alienation means to Arendt the loss of home for humanity. For Arendt, humanity is made possible through the fact that each of us speaks and acts from our own locality in the presence of plural perspectives; our plurality is possible only if we are situated in the earth *and* world. These are her proposed political conditions of living with others in plurality.

However, Arendt's theory of plurality does not sufficiently address the social and ecological aspects of human conditions. Although Arendt strongly emphasizes the fact that we are earth-bound beings (in the sense that we literally cannot live without earthly conditions), her perspective does not give sufficient attention to the fact that our existences are also bound to the innumerous existences of other-than-human entities ecologically. Furthermore, as I discussed in Chapter 2, Arendt's view of the earth (as seen her analysis of labor) does not see the "geographic

difference and the uniqueness of living in particular places."[303] That is, it lacks a view of biocultural relationships. Likewise, ecological crisis often entails socio-political injustices, the power struggles of people. Some of such struggle derives from the dominant view that reduces the land to mere space (or resources) rather than viewing it as place. Thus, I argued in Chapter 2 that abstract theories of ecological crisis fail to take account of the differentially embodied conditions and sociopolitical experiences of people. Arendt's theory alone is limited in understanding our social and ecological conditions of vulnerability and interdependent relationships, and such factors should be accounted for in the conditions of living together with others.

Thus, in this chapter, I supplement Arendt's account with that of Butler, who critiques and expands Arendt's political theory to create a more socially and ecologically accountable one. Butler (2015) criticizes Arendt's dichotomy between the public and private, which fails to reflect our social conditions of precariousness and interdependency. With that in mind, drawing from Arendt's political theory, Butler proposes an ethics of plurality, *the ethics of cohabitation*, which signifies that our human plurality mandates that we cannot choose those with whom we cohabit. This unchosen nature of cohabitation is drawn from *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963): any act of the eradication of groups of people from the earth, i.e., genocide, is an attempt to destroy the condition of human plurality, which Arendt calls a crime against humanity.[304] Butler's normative understanding of plurality, unchosen cohabitation, is not only a matter of humanity, but she suggests that the ethics of unchosen cohabitation should go beyond the scales of human-

[303] David Macauley, "Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Place: From Earth Alienation to *Oikos*," in *Minding Nature: The Philosophers of Ecology*, ed. David Macauley (New York: The Guilford Press, 1996), p. 108.

[304] Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015), pp. 110–116.

communities and include Earth, saying "I seek to offer an ecological supplement to Arendt's anthropocentrism."[305]

In response to Butler's ecological charge, I introduce Rozzi's analysis of biocultural ethics. Rozzi argues that habit (ethics) is a co-evolutionary development through the interrelation of co-inhabitants in the habitat. In other words, to live is not simply a matter of dwelling, but living concerns the relationship among co-inhabitants, habitats, and habits: the ways in which people live together with other-than-human entities in a place. Following Rozzi's analysis, I argue that we should be concerned not only with the eradication of any group of people but also the eradication of the *ways* that people dwell and engage in their environments. Moreover, we should also be concerned with the eradication of other-than-human species and environments themselves. In this light, I argue that the loss of biocultural diversity (including linguistic diversity), the world phenomena of rapid extinction of species, and ecocide can be understood as a crime against humanity, and perhaps even crimes against the Earth, if we can come to understand the condition of innumerous interdependencies that we have as inhabitants of Earth.

## 4.2 Judith Butler on Arendt: Performative Politics of Plurality

In this section, I briefly introduce Butler's overall project of the book *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (2015), in order to clarify how her contributions intersect with this dissertation. I argue that Butler's project not only helps us see the limits of Arendt's theory but also offers an expanded theory of plurality with an ethical framework that can account for the social and ecological conditions of our existences.

In *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, Butler examines the recent events of public assemblies in many different parts of the world, some of which take place against the

[305] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p. 113.

backdrop of neoliberal economic and political systems that produce and sustain a system in which a certain population of lives are treated as disposable.[306] Demonstration has been used in many parts of the world as a form of protest and resistance of the people, and as a matter of fact, demonstration serves to constitute "the people" in a moment. And yet, this democratic enactment of "the people," despite its aspiration, often becomes the site of political struggle, as some populations are more precarious than others. For example, the very act of gathering in a public space exposes the vulnerability of certain bodies, as seen in the Black Lives Matter movement, as such public space is often the domain of state power and violence. Butler's analysis focuses on such enactment of "the people" through assemblies, as well as the meanings of such assemblies, as a locus to expose the precarious existences of bodies.[307] Butler uses her performativity theory along with Arendt's notion of the space of appearance to argue that public assemblies are the very enactment of a performative politics of plurality.

First, let me clarify how Butler's performativity theory intersects with Arendt's political theory. As discussed in Chapter 3, Arendt's political theory is rooted in plurality. Her sense of political agency is relational, which breaks from her predecessors in political theory, who tended to depict a human as "an abstract subject that existed only in the singular" in their theories.[308] As Arendt notes "*man* is apolitical . . . . Politics arises in what lies *between men* and is established as relationships,"[309] Arendt's political agency is always situated in the innumerable web of human relationship. Politics is made possible only when people come to appear through speech and action in the presence of plural others. Through such concerted actions alone, but not bounded by

[306] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p. 11.

[307] Ibid., pp. 1–23, 27, 58.

[308] Margaret Canovan, *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 130.

[309] Hannah Arendt, *The Promise of Politics* (New York: Schocken Books, 2005), p. 95.

affiliations, identities, nor attributes, the public space can be constituted, and this is what Arendt calls the space of appearance.[310] In other words, the space of appearance is not just a matter of appearing but is conditioned by being seen and heard by others from each irreducible unique perspective. To this extent, Arendt's political agency also breaks from the self-sufficient view of agency, because self-disclosure through action and speech in the public sphere is uncontrollable, since it always relies on others' ability to perceive: we are not able to control whether, how, and by whom we are perceived. Arendt's sense of freedom is distinguished from the ability to control (i.e., sovereignty), as freedom is conditioned by and produced by the concerted actions of the people; and this "people" cannot be a homogenized body, as politics is always conditioned in irreducible plurality.[311] To this extent, as Emma Ingala puts it, "the space of appearance proves to be fundamentally performative,"[312] as neither the space of appearance nor political actors are a given stable sphere or identity but are performatively produced.

For Butler, when we say things are produced performatively, such performative production must be distinguished from construction in the sense of "a singular or deliberate 'act',"[313] because the enactment of things comes to matter through "the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names."[314] In other words, the process in which a person comes to *appear* and is *recognized* as a human subject is inseparable from the discourse (including material, linguistic, and historical manifestations) of a human subject, because such regulatory terms such as *human* and *subject* produce the margins from which

[310] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 1958, 2nd ed., with an introduction by Margaret Canovan (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 199.

[311] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 230–36.

[312] Emma Ingala, "From Hannah Arendt to Judith Butler: The Conditions of the Political," in *Subjectivity and the Political: Contemporary Perspectives*, eds. Gavin Rae and Emma Ingala (New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 41.

[313] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 2.

[314] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 2.

bodies can be registered, excluded, and denied. In this sense, the body may appear to be the passive material that regulatory norms like gender are placed on. However, for Butler, our bodies are not merely passive materials but come to "matter" (in both the senses of "to materialize" and "to mean") through regulatory norms like gender, as the norms (in order to be activated) need to be expressed through reiterative performances.[315] For example, "a human subject" is not merely a linguistic construction of the ideal; however, various *modes* and *expressions* of bodily existences (which are associated with categories such as sexuality, gender, disability, etc.) repetitively and discursively produce, shape, and yet sometimes fail to meet the regulatory norm of the "human subject."[316] Through the repetitive and discursive process of such mattering, our bodies enact and reproduce sociocultural norms, such as gender, at both conscious and unconscious levels.

Then, what Butler's contributions signify here is that the performative production of a human subject is inseparable from normative discourse, such as in the case of gender. Butler explains that:

> the performativity of gender presumes a field of appearance in which gender appears, and a scheme of recognizability within which gender shows up in the ways that it does; and since the field of appearance is regulated by norms of recognition that are themselves hierarchical and exclusionary, the performativity of gender is thus bound up with the differential ways in which subjects become eligible for recognition. Recognizing a gender depends fundamentally on whether there is a mode of presentation for that gender, a condition for its appearance . . . .[317]

Thus, for Butler, who can be recognized as a subject is produced performatively, as the ways in which our bodies can *appear* and *be recognized* are always caught up with obligatory norms like gender. This means that even though everyone ideally should be able to become an equally

[315] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 32.

[316] Ibid., pp. 15–16.

[317] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p. 38.

recognizable subject in the politics of plurality, the realm of appearance is also a regulatory space of recognition where certain people are not recognized.[318] However, Butler argues that through repetitive citational process, norms can wear out and their margins can possibly expand; thus, "even as norms seem to determine which genders can appear and which cannot, they also fail to control the sphere of appearance, operating more like absent or fallible police than effective totalitarian powers."[319] Thus, Butler's performativity theory is not a strictly descriptive theory but is a performative praxis as it can expand a "more possible and more livable" space for those who are at the margins.[320] Like Arendt, Butler configures politics as plural performative actions. Butler argues that Arendt's politics of plurality can make it possible for those who are stateless to seek "the right to have rights" through plural performative actions such as assembly and resistance.[321] In this sense, Butler, drawing from Arendt, sees that assemblies of people are the very example of performative politics of plurality, like the space of appearance, as they are "exercising a right to appear, to exercise freedom."[322] However, what Butler elucidates more clearly than Arendt is that the space of appearance is not struggle-free, because normative production and recognition are always in negotiation with power.[323]

If the space of appearance is a realm of the recognizable, and if the norms of recognizable and unrecognizable forms are produced performatively through a negotiation of power, then the space of appearance is an embodiment of political struggle. And when being seen and heard, i.e., recognized is the condition for political enactment of action, then, the issue is quite obvious that

[318] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, pp. 34–40.

[319] Ibid., pp. 38–39.

[320] Ibid., p. 32.

[321] Ibid., pp. 48–49.

[322] Ibid., p. 26.

[323] Ibid., p. 88.

this recognition itself ought to be a political matter.[324] Butler's performativity theory helps us to understand how the realm of appearance is entangled with the power-dynamics of recognition, and how such understanding is important for us to discuss the politics of plurality—living with others. Thus, Butler asks, "Who enters this plurality, and who does not, and how are such matters decided?"[325] This critical point is where Butler can expand Arendt's politics of plurality.

### 4.2.1 Precarious Bodies and Performative Bodies

Another reason Butler draws from Arendt is Arendt's refusal of expressive identity-based politics. Arendt's understanding of identity here means the "who-ness" instead of "what-ness" of our existence. As discussed in Chapter 3, distinctive and unique existence, i.e., identity can only be attained through action in the public realm. As Bonnie Honig puts it, "on Arendt's account, identity is the performative production[,] not the expressive condition or essence of action."[326] For Arendt, expressive identities such as ethnicity, racial, sexual, gender, and economic status cannot be the shared expressive condition of pursuing freedom in plurality, as these identity politics may become "insidious resources for the homogenizing control of behavior and the silencing of independent criticism."[327] Besides, these identities are private to the extent that they are associated with necessity and the private realm[328] (in the sense of "a given fact, not to be made or acted upon"[329]). To clarify this point: this, however, does not mean that women, for example, cannot enter the public realm; rather the constitution of the public realm, for Arendt,

[324] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p. 35.

[325] Ibid., p. 77

[326] Bonnie Honig, "Toward an Agonistic Feminism: Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Identity," in *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt*, ed. Bonnie Honig (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), p. 136.

[327] Honig, "Toward an Agonistic Feminism," p. 153.

[328] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p. 45; Honig, "Toward an Agonistic Feminism," p. 142.

[329] Honig, "Toward an Agonistic Feminism," p. 153.

should not rely on the whatness of people (i.e., constative identities), but on the unexpected unfolding of who-ness. Honig clarifies this point very clearly:

> From Arendt's perspective, a political community that constitutes itself on the basis of a prior, shared, and stable identity threatens to close the space of politics, to homogenize or repress the plurality and multiplicity that political action postulates.[330]

In the eyes of Arendt then, contemporary identity politics (such as Black Lives Matter, Women's March, Occupy Movement) may appear to be a symptomatic phenomenon of the rise of the social, where affiliation-based bodily needs and wants (racial, gender, and economic concerns) "invade" the political space. As Honig says, "this feature of Arendt's work, combined with the public/private distinction upon which it is mapped, have led feminist critics of Arendt to fault her for theorizing a politics that is in inhospitable to women and women's issues."[331] This, of course, raises an important concern regarding the tension between the need to recognize injustice experienced by certain communities and the needs of plural politics, where each of us will not be reduced into a homogenized body. Honig continues, "the problem is that Arendt grounds that rejection in a refusal to treat private-realm identities, like gender, as potential sites of politicization."[332] In other words, Arendt perceives that issues that are politicized in the name of certain identities not only falsely appropriate the political sphere but also fail to recognize that identities like gender are personal and given. However, both Honig and Butler propose that Arendt's refusal of an expressive identity politics, through a critical reading, may be able to overcome this tension.

Butler writes that Arendt understands the public sphere to be a domain of independence in which bodily concerns should not enter, even though the very speaking actor of the public

[330] Honig, "Toward an Agonistic Feminism," p. 149.

[331] Ibid., p. 136.

[332] Ibid., p. 136.

sphere is embodied. Butler points out that the group of equals in the public is seen in the image of independent, able, and perhaps male bodies, reflecting the traditional and social gender roles. On the other hand, these characteristic of bodies in the private realm mirror what the public bodies are *not*, such as dependent, the disabled, elderly, childish, and feminine.[333] For Arendt, the condition of entering the public sphere lies in leaving "these necessitarian, life-sustaining concerns behind," as such is "the mark of their capacity to act."[334] Ultimately, the population of those who cannot afford to handle their life matters also cannot afford entry into the domain of freedom; justice, equality, and freedom turn out to be exclusive property of the few privileged in the public sphere.[335] Butler thus concludes that "if the body remains at the level of necessity, then it would appear that no political account of freedom can be an embodied one."[336] Butler's contributions toward Arendt is the reinterpretation of bodies in order to amend the gap between freedom and necessity "from the point of view of the [politically and economically induced] unequal demographic distribution of precarity."[337]

Echoing Arendt, for Butler, identity politics, despite the legitimacy of its struggles, "fails to furnish a broader conception of what it means, politically, to live together, across differences, sometimes in modes of unchosen proximity, especially when living together… remains an ethical and political imperative."[338] Assemblies are often formed by people with specific interests or demands, or by people who share proximate experiences, such as gender and racial inequality. That is, such intentionality of assemblies may be described as identity politics, which

[333] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, pp. 75, 86.

[334] Honig, "Toward an Agonistic Feminism," p. 142.

[335] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p. 47

[336] Ibid., p. 47.

[337] Ibid.

[338] Ibid., p. 27.

can be at odds with plurality. Butler's aim of her book is precisely not to reduce assemblies as an expression of identity politics but reinterpret them as that of precarious bodies that demand "for a more livable set of lives."[339] According to Butler, precarious existence is what we all share among us, as we are social and bodily beings that rely on others, materials, and social institutions. However, she continues, that the distribution of precariousness differs among us, because precarity is a "politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support more than others, and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death."[340] In overcoming the tension between identity politics and plural politics, Butler proposes precarity "as a site of alliance among groups of people who do not otherwise find much in common and between whom there is sometimes even suspicion and antagonism."[341] In other words, Butler's project expands the Arendtian sense of performative action to performative politics of bodies, to argue that concerted actions of precarious bodies themselves "express their indignation and . . . enact their plural existence in public space."[342]

Butler points out that the only forms of bodies that can appear in Arendt's sense of the public space are speaking and acting bodies "as a mode of thinking and judging,"[343] which is distinguished from bodily existence as a form of necessity in the private realm. The issue Butler poses is precisely about the duality of bodies in Arendt's political theory, which fails to see that bodies in the private sphere are performative productions; Arendt's theory sees the body as the symbol of necessity and as constative, and that such bodily demands (hunger, gender, sexualities, etc.) should be barred from the site of performative becoming. As Honig elaborates on Butler,

[339] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p. 25.

[340] Ibid., p. 33.

[341] Ibid., p. 27.

[342] Ibid., p. 26.

[343] Ibid., p. 45.

what Butler's performativity theory does is "to unmask identities that aspire to successful constation, to deauthorize and redescribe them as performative productions by identifying spaces that escape or resist identitarian administration, regulation, and expression."[344] Butler's gender performativity helps us understand that such identities associated with the private realm are not inherent but performative productions.

This is precisely the point where Butler departs from Arendt because "that Arendtian presupposition from *The Human Condition* presumes that the body does not enter into the speech act."[345] This Arendtian speaking and acting body needs to leave behind the other aspects of our bodily existence, i.e., embodiment, in order to enter the public realm. This interpretation suggests that action arises not from bodies, but from relinquishment of bodily concern, thus falling into a dichotomy between bodies and mind as necessity and freedom, respectively.[346] Thus, Butler argues:

> If action is defined as independent, implying a fundamental difference from dependency, then our self-understanding as actors is predicated upon a disavowal of those living and interdependent relations upon which our lives depend."[347]

That is, what Butler problematizes in Arendt's view of political actors is the absence or exclusion of bodily needs and conditions for the enactment of freedom, which fails to understand the fact that our social and ecological interdependent relationships sustain not only our lives but our actions.[348] Butler elaborates followingly:

> Only in the context of a living world does the human as an agentic creature emerge, one whose dependency on others and on living processes gives rise to the very capacity for action. Living and acting are bound together in such a way that the conditions that make

[344] Honig, "Toward an Agonistic Feminism," p. 148.

[345] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p. 45.

[346] Ibid., pp. 45, 46–47, 205.

[347] Ibid., p. 44.

[348] Ibid.

> it possible for anyone to live are part of the very object of political reflection and action.[349]

Butler's point here is that the politics of plurality needs to take account of our social and ecological conditions of precarious existences and interdependency, and such embodied conditions, but not identities, can form certain ethical obligations in and for the politics of plurality.[350]

### 4.2.2 The Ethic of Cohabitation and Crimes Against Humanity

As Butler and Honig show, Arendt's understanding of the formation of political agency lacks the contextuality of bodily existence as embedded in social and ecological material conditions and interdependency. If the politics of plurality concerns living *with* others, then not only the condition of "with," but also both "living" and "others" ought to be the subject of rigorous political questioning. Who and what are included and neglected in these "others"? As discussed in Chapter 3, if this "living" needs to resist alienation from the earth and world, then how is such situated cohabitation possible? What if this very possibility of "living" (as well as acting) is sustained in the web of innumerous relationships with others? What ethical obligations will emerge in the pursuit of plural politics?

Although Arendt may lack in elucidating the power-dynamics of the space of appearance and in grasping embodied freedom (that does not disown marginalized populations), Arendt's political theory still offers something very important. As previously discussed, Arendt's plurality does not come to be through prior agreements or shared identities. Butler reads Arendt's basis for plural politics as "the unchosen character of earthly cohabitation."[351] What this means, according

[349] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p. 44.

[350] Ibid., pp. 119, 121.

[351] Ibid., p. 111.

to Butler is, that the politics of plurality ethically demands that "no one has the prerogative to choose with whom to cohabit the earth."[352] In *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Arendt condemns the Jerusalem trial of Adolf Eichmann for not grasping the nature of the crime that Eichmann committed. In her eyes, the Nazi's genocide of Jewish people is not merely a crime against the Jewish people, as the Nazis believed they were entitled to choose which population should live on the earth.

> It was when the Nazi regime declared that the German people not only were unwilling to have any Jews in Germany but wished to make the entire Jewish people disappear from the face of the earth that the new crime, the crime against humanity—in the sense of a crime "against the human status," or against the very nature of mankind—appeared.[353]

For Arendt, the crime against humanity, even though the crime was "perpetrated upon the body of the Jewish people,"[354] is the proper name for such an act of genocide. That is, plurality is conditioned by the premise of not granting anybody or any institution the power to decide which members are worthy/unworthy of cohabitation with on the earth, and the violation of such premise is a crime against humanity.[355] In response to Arendt's unchosen nature of plural cohabitation, Butler claims that that Arendt's contribution can "serve the basis of our obligation"[356] toward "open-ended plurality."[357] Butler argues that our obligatory opposition to practices and institutions against open-ended plurality should acknowledge the struggle against precarity as an indispensable part of such open-ended plurality, because "precarity is indissociable from that dimension of politics that addresses the organization and protection of

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[352] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p. 111.

[353] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, 1963, rev. and enlarged ed. (New York: The Viking Press, 1973), p. 268.

[354] Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, p. 269.

[355] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p. 112.

[356] Ibid., p. 115.

[357] Ibid., p. 113.

bodily needs."[358] That is, for Butler, preserving the life of unchosen members of cohabitation takes the critical lens of precarity to understand the embodied struggle toward plurality. Although Arendt herself does not intend to offer a normative account of plurality, Butler suggests that Arendt's theory actually offers "an ethical view of cohabitation that serves as a guideline for particular forms of politics."[359] In this sense, plurality is a political and ethical commitment to live together with others.

Again, this "living" and "others" should be our open-ended inquiry for such ethics and politics. Butler questions both in the context of agency:

> If we are living organisms who speak and act, then we are clearly related to a vast continuum or network of living beings; we not only live among them, but our persistence as living organisms depends on that matrix of sustaining interdependent relations.[360]

Although Arendt's ethical and political cohabitation are for humanity, as Butler's contributions show, the ethics of unchosen earthly cohabitation should concern our interdependent relationships with other-than-human entities and the earth.[361] If the ethics and politics of plurality does not presume a collective identity, then the exclusive and abstract identity of "human" as a given condition of politics seems to be an odd assumption, especially when such a regulatory norm is produced performatively. As Butler argues, then what it presumes is "a set of *enabling and dynamic relations* that include support, dispute, breakage, joy, and solidarity."[362] This set of enabling and dynamic relations is, of course, inseparable from innumerable interdependent relationships with other-than-humans on the earth. Putting these innumerable relationships into

[358] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p. 119.

[359] Ibid., p. 113.

[360] Ibid., p. 86.

[361] Ibid., p. 113.

[362] Ibid., p. 27. Emphasis added.

the context of Chapter 3, alienation from the earth should include alienation from these earthly co-inhabitants.

Then, if the eradication of a group of people from the earth is a crime against humanity, then what about the elimination of diverse *ways* that people live on the earth? As Butler's reading of Arendt shows, if appearing and being recognized in the public is an indispensable condition of plural politics, and if the ways in which people can appear and be recognized are entangled in a matrix of discourses, then we should be concerned about the enabling and disabling conditions of ways certain people can appear and be recognized. And these enabling and disabling conditions should be investigated not from an abstract human identity, but from diverse embodied entities that depend "on that matrix of sustaining interdependent relations."[363] In extending Butler's reading of Arendt through her theories of precarity and gender performativity, I argue then that eliminating the conditions in which diverse ways of living and appearing are sustained is a crime against humanity—perhaps a crime against earth. In order to explore such argument, I would like to focus on the elimination of biocultural diversity. In the following section, I examine these points through the work of Ricardo Rozzi, who discusses the link between biological and cultural homogenization.

## 4.3 Biocultural Diversity for the Politics of Plurality

In this section, I introduce the work of Ricardo Rozzi, focusing on his conceptions of biocultural ethics and biocultural homogenization. In doing so, I show why not only the eradication of groups of people but also the elimination of the conditions of diverse ways of living and appearing (which includes biocultural diversity) is a matter of concern for plurality. In this section I thus analyze the interrelationship between biocultural diversity and the politics of

[363] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p. 86.

plurality. While biocultural diversity is often discussed in the context of sustainability, there is not much discussion of biocultural diversity in the context of plural politics.[364] Following Butler's claim that the normative accounts of plural politics needs to be grounded in precarity and interdependency, this section focuses on socio-ecological interdependency through a biocultural lens.

### 4.3.1 Rozzi's Biocultural Ethics and Homogenization

Rozzi proposes an ethical framework that is grounded in a biocultural lens.[365] This conceptual lens sits opposite to the binary understanding that the biosphere and culture are two distinct realms as if they exist independently. Rather, a biocultural lens perceives a co-evolutionary interrelationship between these two realms such that, for example, cultural diversity cannot be separated from biological diversity. In this light, Luisa Maffi, a leading scholar of biocultural conservation, describes that "biocultural diversity comprises the diversity of life in all of its manifestations—biological, cultural and linguistic—which are interrelated (and likely co-evolved) within a complex socio-ecological adaptive system."[366]

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[364] For example, Alexandria K. Pool (2018) points out that the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which was set by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2015, lacks a biocultural lens, failing to "explicitly articulate the importance of local ecological knowledge and cultural diversity for sustainability as a high-level poverty, and these concepts are only referenced in support of goals oriented towards more specific economic development" (p. 57). See Alexandria K. Pool, "Where is Goal 18? The Need of Biocultural Heritage in the Sustainable Development Goals," *Environmental Values* 27 (2018): 55–80. Also in "Biocultural Approaches to Sustainability: A Systematic Review of the Scientific Literature," Jan Hanspach et al. (2020) provide an extensive literature review on the studies that uses biocultural approaches. In their finding, they point out the social injustice component, such as analysis of power and gender, is lacking in the biocultural approaches they reviewed. (p. 651). See Jan Janspach et al., "Biocultural Approaches to Sustainability: A Systematic Review of the Scientific Literature," *People and Nature* 2, no. 3 (2020): 643–59.

[365] The term *biocultural* does not have a set in stone, fixed definition. As seen in the paper "What do Anthropologists Mean When They Use the Term *Biocultural?*" by Andrea S. Wiley and Jennifer M. Cullin, the term could potentially be interpreted differently from scholar to scholar. Their paper offers a literary survey of the usage of the term in the field of anthropology. See Andrea S. Wiley and Jennifer M. Cullin, "What do Anthropologists Mean When They Use the Term *Biocultural*?," *American Anthropologist* 118, no. 3 (2016): 554–69.

[366] Luisa Maffi, "What is Biocultural Diversity?," in *Biocultural Diversity Conservation: A Global Sourcebook*, eds. Luisa Maffi and Ellen Woodley (London: Earthscan, 2010), p. 5.

Rozzi uses the conceptual framework to propose a biocultural ethics that "ontologically and axiologically" takes account of "the interrelations between the *Habits* and the *Habitats* that shape the identities and well-being of *co-in-Habitants.*"[367] Rozzi calls this the 3Hs model of biocultural ethics.[368] His reasoning behind this proposal is his critique of modern ethics, which perceives humans as detached placeless beings, like what Arendt would call "the dwellers of universe."[369] Rozzi critiques that "modern ethics has decoupled human habits from the habitats where they take place, as if humans and their identities could exist in isolation from their habitats and other-than-human co-inhabitants."[370] In other words, modern ethics fails to perceive habitats, as well as our interrelation with co-inhabitants of the habitat, as ontologically integral components of our ways of living (inhabiting).

Rozzi locates this issue of decoupling in his analysis of the Greek word *ethos,* which the term *ethics* is drived from. He analyzes the archaic meaning of *ethos*, which used to include the meaning of "den," as a place where animals and humans dwell, in addition to the meaning of customary habits.[371] Thus, Rozzi argues that the archaic account of *ethos* comprises two things: habitats (of animal and human inhabitants) and habits.[372] However, Rozzi points out that the Aristotelian usage of the term *ethos* lost the meaning of habitats—both for animal and humans.

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[367] Ricardo Rozzi, "Introduction to Integrating Philosophy and Ecology: Biocultural Interfaces," in *Linking Ecology and Ethics for a Changing World: Values, Philosophy, and Action,* eds. Ricardo Rozzi et al., vol. 1 of *Ecology and Ethics* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013), p. 4.

[368] Rozzi, "Introduction to Integrating Philosophy and Ecology," p. 4.

[369] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 3.

[370] Ricardo Rozzi, "Biocultural Ethics: Recovering the Vital Links between the Inhabitants, Their Habits, and Habitats," *Environmental Ethics* 34 (Spring 2012): 27. As I am going to cite the two of works from Rozzi that are identical for abbreviated citation for footnotes, I will cite this source as Rozzi (2012), "Biocultural Ethics" here after, in order to avoid confusion.

[371] Rozzi (2012), "Biocultural Ethics," pp. 39–40.

[372] Ibid.; Ricardo Rozzi, "Biocultural Ethics: From Biocultural Homogenization Toward Biocultural Conservation," in *Linking Ecology and Ethics for a Changing World: Values, Philosophy, and Action,* edited by Ricardo Rozzi et al., vol. 1 of *Ecology and Ethics* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013), pp. 20–21. I cite this source as Rozzi (2013), "Biocultural Ethics" hereafter, in order to avoid confusion.

Rather it came to solely focus on human habits in the light of civic life in a *polis*.[373] Rozzi criticizes that modern Eurocentric ethics follows the Aristotelian reductive notion of *ethos*, which does not consider the interrelationships between the habitats and habits of human and other-than-human inhabitants. As seen in the practices of colonialism, this view assumes certain habits should be applied and cultivated universally despite the existence of diverse local habitats.[374]

Thus, Rozzi proposes that ethics should recover the original meaning of *ethos*, which refers to "both the place where one lives [with others] and the ways in which one lives."[375] By applying an ecological lens to the original meaning of *ethos*, Rozzi lays out the descriptive and normative conceptual framework of the interrelations among habitats, habits, and co-inhabitants in the 3Hs model of biocultural ethics. These three Hs are, however, not reduced to the biophysical sphere. According to Rozzi, habitat consists of three dimensions: biophysical, symbolic-linguistic, and sociopolitical.[376] In corresponding to habitat, habit is also multidimensional, and it includes but is not limited to, biological, sociological, epistemological, and ethical practices.[377] Lastly, the conception of co-inhabitants represents not only human and other-than-human nature living in the habitat, but importantly signifies the fact that inhabitants *share* the habitat in "an ecological-evolutionary process."[378] This is not just a matter of ontological reification of human existence, but Rozzi's point here is that we have an ethical

[373] Rozzi (2012), "Biocultural Ethics," p. 40; Rozzi (2013), "Biocultural Ethics," p. 21.

[374] Rozzi (2013), "Biocultural Ethics," p. 21.

[375] Ibid.

[376] See the full description of Rozzi's three dimensions of habitats in: Ricardo Rozzi, "Biocultural Homogenization: A Wicked Problem in the Anthropocene," in *From Biocultural Homogenization to Biocultural Conservation*, eds. Ricardo Rozzi et al., vol. 3 of *Ecology and Ethic* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2018), pp. 24–25.

[377] Rozzi, "Biocultural Homogenization," pp. 25–27.

[378] Ibid., p. 36.

obligation toward the habitat derived from the fact that we as co-inhabitants *share* the habitat with other-than-human co-inhabitants. Rozzi claims that this ontological and axiological sense of sharing a habitat with other-than-human nature is not anything new but is "consistent with ecological worldviews of many native people, where the birds are companions with whom a habitat must be shared."[379] Rozzi argues that the 3Hs model of biocultural ethics allows us to recognize the interspecific dynamics of social and ecological injustice imposed by particular habits that undermine the well-being of the co-inhabitants of the habitats.

Rozzi uses the 3Hs model of biocultural ethics as a crucial lens to understand the global phenomenon of biocultural homogenization. He describes biocultural homogenization as follows:

> Biocultural homogenization is a pervasive, but underappreciated, driver of today's rapid global environmental change. It entails simultaneous and interlocked losses of native biological and cultural diversity at local, regional, and global scales. This process leads to the disruption of co-evolutionary interrelationships between cultures and their land and massive replacements of native biota and cultures by a few cosmopolitan species, languages, and cultures . . . .[380]

Importantly, biocultural homogenization is not just about biotic homogenization or cultural homogenization; it allows us to perceive the interrelationship between the loss of biotic and cultural diversity. Furthermore, the loss of biocultural diversity through biocultural homogenization is not equally distributed in the world. Biocultural homogenization works through power-dynamics and entails injustice.[381] For example, homogenization entails the destruction and often elimination of species and cultures that already reside in a given location. Rozzi argues that the disruptive replacement of local cultural habits and/or the destruction of habitats by cosmopolitan-and-global-economy-driven habits likely leads to the homogenization

[379] Rozzi, "Biocultural Homogenization," p. 36.

[380] Rozzi (2013), "Biocultural Ethics," p. 14.

[381] Ibid., pp. 9, 14.

of habitats and vice versa, which degrades the well-being of co-inhabitants.

For example, Rozzi's studies in the sub-Antarctic Magellanic ecoregion, which is one of the last few standings of wilderness areas in the world, show that many residents of the cities in the region barely know about their endemic plants but know about cosmopolitan species, such as apple trees and tropical palm trees, from other continents such as Asia and Europe. According to Rozzi, the dominant decorative trees and plants in the cities of the region are also cosmopolitan species, to a level that "more closely resembles the flora of the plazas in Madrid, New York, and Vancouver, than the flora of the forests that grow a few kilometers outside the austral cities in the sub-Antarctic Magellanic ecoregion."[382] Rozzi indicates that the feedback loop which leads to residents' preference for cosmopolitan species over the native flora seems to homogenize the habitat, and such habitat reinforces the aesthetic and cultural values of the residents.[383] According to Rozzi, one of the causes of biocultural homogenization is school education. In the case of a school in Cuenca, Ecuador, Rozzi points out that the students are exposed to colonial biocultural preferences for the Spanish language inside the classroom, which ironically fails to fully represent local biophysical and cultural realities outside the classroom, such as the "Aymara and Quechua language and Amerindian cultural traditions" that "are maintained in the paramo outside the school."[384]

This case reflects one of the concerns that school education is associated with linguistic homogenization, i.e., the loss of symbolic-linguistic diversity. According to the twenty-fourth edition of *Ethnologue*, there are 7,139 different languages still spoken around the world, and currently twenty-eight percent of these living languages are categorized as in trouble and

[382] Rozzi (2013), "Biocultural Ethics," p. 12.

[383] Ibid.

[384] Ibid., p. 13.

fourteen percent as dying.[385] Given this number, a little over forty percent of the world's living languages are under some level of threat of extinction. In particular, their data suggests that the percentage of linguistic endangerment is disproportionately high in North and South America given the number of existing languages in each region.[386] Despite these threatening conditions, Rozzi points out that formal school education merely covers ten percent of living languages.[387] UNESCO also indicates that many of these endangered languages are spoken by indigenous people, and "indigenous languages are particularly vulnerable because many of them are not taught at school or used in the public sphere."[388] When the public sphere (including schools) does not stand for multilingualism, the condition for minority language speakers to appear and be recognized in the public is to speak the majority language. Linguistic assimilation is a historically known tactic of assimilation of native populations into the dominant population in colonialism and imperialism. Such processes may take place through

> the imposition of the dominant language in schooling, the media, governmental affairs, and most other public contexts; through the denigration of the local languages and the cultures they embody as 'defective,' 'primitive,' unfit for the 'modern world'; as well as through the severe restriction of their contexts of use and even explicit governmental prohibition of their use, resulting in punishment, at times corporeal, for violations.[389]

In this sense, language assimilation opposes the politics of plurality, as only the specific

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[385] David M Eberhard, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig, eds., *Ethnologue: Language of the World*, 24th ed. (Dallas, Texas: SIL International, 2021). Online Version http://www.ethnologue.com (Accessed on April 4th, 2021).

[386] For example, according to their data, in North America, there are currently1059 living langauges. However, 276 languages are categorized as in trouble, and 373 languages are categorized as dying; this means about 60% of the living languages in North America are under some level of threat of extinction. In South America, 455 living languages are recognized. 117 of them are categorized as in trouble and 139 languages are dying. This means that a little more than 55% of the living languages are under some level of threat of extinction. See Eberhard, Simons, and Fennig, *Ethnologue: Language of the World*.

[387] Rozzi (2012), "Biocultural Ethics," pp. 34–35.

[388] UNESCO, "Upcoming Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022–2032) to Focus on Indigenous language User's Human Rights," (February 28, 2020). Available at https://en.unesco.org/news/upcoming-decade-indigenous-languages-2022-2032-focus-indigenous-language-users-human-rights (accessed April 4, 2021).

[389] Luisa Maffi, "Introduction: On the Interdependence of Biological and Cultural Diversity," in *On Biocultural Diversity: Linking Language, Knowledge, and the Environment*, ed. Luisa Maffi (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), p. 5.

language speakers or ethnolinguistic groups are perceived to be appropriate political actors.

The loss of languages also promotes further biocultural homogenization. Manuel Lizarralde also points out the correlation between the loss of native languages and the speakers' ethnobiological knowledge and the change in their lifestyles (e.g., from subsistence living to cash economy) in South America.[390] As we reside in the linguistic world, which shapes and influences the ways we understand and engage (e.g., habits) on this planet, the loss of linguistic diversity may lead to the loss of diverse worldviews and interrelationships among co-inhabitants.[391] Luisa Maffi makes an important point on the loss of linguistic diversity in relation to knowledge of the locals:

> While not all knowledge may be linguistically encoded, language does represent the main tool for humans to elaborate, maintain, develop, and transmit knowledge . . . . Global socioeconomic change disrupts traditional ways of life, promoting poverty, population growth, overexploitation of the environment by outside forces and by local groups themselves, as well as tension and conflicts over local peoples' land and resource rights. Under such conditions of rapid and drastic change, traditional knowledge, beliefs, and wisdom, and the languages in which they are encoded, tend to lose their functions for local peoples and begin to erode . . . . Furthermore, local knowledge does not "translate" easily into the majority languages to which minority language speakers switch. Generally, the replacing language does not represent an equivalent vehicle for linguistic expression and cultural maintenance…, and along with the dominant language usually comes a dominant cultural framework that begins to take over and displace the traditional one."[392]

Language is an integral part of the practice and conservation of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) of local and indigenous people. Maffi's point about translatability is very important. As Rozzi's biocultural ethics shows, if language is a coevolutionary product of long-term interrelationship between co-inhabitants and habitats, then the assumption that any (dominant) languages can "translate" any other biocultural expressions and experiences is problematic and

[390] Manuel Lizarralde, "Biodiversity and Loss of Indigenous Languages and Knowledge in South America," in *On Biocultural Diversity: Linking Language, Knowledge, and the Environment*, ed. Luisa Maffi (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), pp. 265–81.

[391] Rozzi (2012), "Biocultural Ethics," p. 34.

[392] Maffi, "Introduction," p. 6.

short-sighted. In this sense, the assumption that science is a universal translational language of our diverse biocultural lived experience fails. As discussed in Chapter 2, Haraway would call such hunger for total translation in "the interest of unfettered power."[393] Once languages are lost, their speakers' ways of livings are also lost and vice versa. Like the extinction of species, Maffi says that the extinction of living languages "often represents a total and irretrievable loss to their former speakers, and to humanity as a whole."[394]

In "Learning the Grammar of Animacy," Robin Kimmerer beautifully and powerfully gives her story of recovering her ancestral language Potawatomi, which is currently spoken fluently only by nine people in the world.[395] Her story of learning the language is not just about memorizing the vocabulary or grammar of the language. Her learning takes place through dialogues with the remaining speakers, through which she is exposed to their worldview: the ways in which the Potawatomi language speakers inhabit the land with other-than-human coinhabitants. According to Kimmerer, for example, the Potawatomi's sense of coinhabitants includes many things commonly considered to be inanimate, such as rock and water, as they perceive that rock and water are animate beings with spirit and life, "the animacy of the world, the life that pulses through all things . . . ."[396] Kimmerer's story makes us realize that the boundary that sets who/what should be counted as coinhabitants significantly relies on the biocultural experiences of the people. In this sense, the extinction of Potawatomi and other indigenous languages may lead to the extinction of the ways in which indigenous people inhabit

[393] Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 581.

[394] Maffi, "Introduction," p. 5.

[395] Kimmerer Robin, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific, Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*, (Minneapolis: Milkweed Edition, 2013), p. 50.

[396] Robin, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, pp. 55–56.

the land with other-than-human coinhabitants; the animacy of the world, or the animacy of the coinhabitants will be lost.

As Rozzi reminds us, many of these beautiful languages and worldviews are at risk of being replaced by dominating cultures. This replacement or homogenization is resisted through the struggle of the people and communities. Maffi elaborates on the political struggle of not all but many indigenous and local residents who rely on subsistence from the land and sea for their livings in the context of the interrelation between identity and language:

> indigenous and other local peoples, struggling for survival and self-determination with secure land bases and means of subsistence, increasingly see their languages and cultural traditions as essential elements in this struggle. Language, cultural traditions, and land are considered by most of them as equally constitutive of their identity as distinct peoples and of their right to live as such . . . .[397]

Language is not merely an external tool but an integral part of who we are. As I previously discussed in the section on Butler, the point here is not identity politics—linguistic or ethnic essentialism. Rather, the point is that the ways we can appear and be recognized is a crucial concern for the politics of plurality. As Gloria Anzaldúa points out in "How to Tame a Wild Tongue," oppression of one's language is oppression of one's identity, as a language can "communicat[e] the realities and values true to [oneself] . . . ."[398] If one's native tongues are under the threat of extinction from both explicit and implicit politically and economically sanctioned assimilation, that is not merely a threat to linguistic identity but a threat to performative identity in plural politics. Extending Butler's notion of precarity, biocultural homogenization is a result of the politically and economically induced unequally distribution of precarity, where certain populations' ways of life are deemed unworthy of institutional

[397] Maffi, "Introduction," p. 11.

[398] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 4th ed. (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012), p. 77.

protection. In this sense, the eradication of the diverse ways of inhabiting, expressing, and acting are a crime against humanity, akin to genocide itself.[399] Although Arendt's conception of natality gives us a hope to initiate anew despite the loss of one's native tongue, we have to resist and oppose the homogenization of our plural existence. This homogenization should include the global phenomenon of biocultural homogenization.

### 4.3.2 Crimes Against the Earth: A Case Explored through Ecocide

As Butler proposed the ethics of unchosen cohabitation through extending Arendt's politics of plurality to include every inhabitant and the earth itself,[400] I would like to extend the crime against humanity to the Earth in order to highlight the web of enabling and dynamic relationships that cannot be contained in the name of humanity. As I discussed above, Potawatomi and other indigenous livelihoods are under the threat of global biocultural homogenization. This homogenization occurs not just through linguistic (or cultural habits), although this is one of the crucial modes of biocultural homogenization. Rozzi says that "biocultural homogenization does not only imply monocultures or globalized modes of living, but also implies an ecocide that is rapidly expanding around the planet."[401] Although Rozzi does not elaborate on ecocide much further in the context of biocultural homogenization, here I would like to focus on ecocide to elucidate its nexus with genocide and perhaps to the destruction of life itself. My attempt here does not mean to negate the importance of the rights of indigenous people and their livelihood by using the word *Earth* instead of humanity. Rather, my position here is to challenge the narrow boundary of humanity that fails to include the eradication of other-than-

[399] There are some studies that examine the nexus between ecocide and genocide. I discuss this point more clearly in the following section.

[400] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, p. 113.

[401] Rozzi, "Biocultural Homogenization," p. 39.

human entities and the destruction of habitats in its integral concern. I argue that ecocide is a key for us to understand why the rapid extinction of species and diverse ways of living is worthy of examining as a crime against humanity, perhaps a crime against the Earth.

Ecocide has recently started gaining more attention in green criminology and environmental humanities given the rising concern toward ecological crisis. Although earlier discussion on ecocide was in the scheme of war crimes,[402] recent discussions center around ongoing settler colonial and postcolonial economic and geopolitical exploitation, extraction of resources, destruction of local subsistence living, and particularly that of indigenous people; such recent discussion seeks to establish ecocide as an international crime.[403] Particularly, as Marin Crook and Damien Short suggest, the link between ecocide and genocide, which they call "the genocide-ecocide nexus," is clarified by articulating ecological, cultural, and spiritual interrelationships that indigenous people have with their co-inhabitants and their habitat.[404] That is, ecocide can be used "as a structural technique of genocide."[405]

For example, In "Environmental Genocide: Native Americans and Toxic Waste," Daniel Brook argues that the continuous U.S. governmental and industrial practice of making many Native American reservations and the neighboring areas as the sites of (both legal and illegal) toxic waste dumps and heavy industrial mining is a form of ecologically induced genocide. He notes that this form of genocide is not "the result of a systematic plan with malicious intent to

[402] Sandra Baquedano Jer, "Ecocide or Environmental Self-Destruction?," *Environmental Ethics* 41 (Fall 2019): 237–239; Martin Crook and Short Damien, "Marx, Lemkin and the Genocide-Ecocide Nexus," *The International Journal of Human Rights* 18, no. 3 (2014): 306–7.

[403] Martin Crook, Damien Short, and Nigel South, "Ecocide, Genocide, Capitalism, and Colonialism: Consequences for Indigenous Peoples and Global Ecosystems Environments," *Theoretical Criminology* 22, no.3. (2018): 298–317.

[404] Martin Crook and Short Damien, "Marx, Lemkin and the Genocide-Ecocide Nexus," pp. 298–319.

[405] Ibid., p. 313.

exterminate Native Americans"[406] but rather his analysis suggests that this is a modern colonial technique in which many existing forms of injustices such as material poverty, the high unemployment, environmental racism, and so on are combined to create a system of continued precarity.[407]

Anthropogenic climate change can be another form of ecocide-genocide. For example, low-lying small island developing states (SIDS) like Tuvalu are under threat of "physical disappearance from the earth through inundation, or, at an earlier stage already, a state of inhabitability" due to the impact of climate change.[408] According to Anja Kanngieser, in the case of Nauru, not only climate impact, but the military exploitation and destruction during the World War I and II by Japan and Australia, and both foreign and domestic corporation's mining in the colonial and postcolonial resource extraction (which invokes the contamination of water and the food insecurity) are continuously hindering Nauru's socioenvironmental ecosystem. Kanngieser argues that this continuous exploitation "is made feasible by the nation's precariousness within a nexus of geopolitical and ecological violence."[409] In this sense, as Alexander Dunlap points out, "the genocide-ecocide nexus is a long-term, continuous and coercive process operating by various means and methods."[410]

As above examples show, ecocide can be a clear example of a crime against humanity, when we understand the interrelation between ecocide and genocide. This is a serious problem in

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[406] Daniel Brook, "Environmental Genocide: Native Americans and Toxic Waste," *American Journal of Economics and* Sociology 57, no. 1 (1998): 105.

[407] Brook, "Environmental Genocide," pp. 105–13.

[408] Kevin Jaschik, "Small States and International Politics: Climate Change, the Maldives and Tuvalu," *International Politics* 51, no. 2 (2014): 273.

[409] Anja Kanngieser, "Weaponizing Ecocide: Nauru, Offshore Incarceration, and Environmental Crisis," *The Contemporary Pacific* 32, no. 2. (2020): 492.

[410] Alexander Dunlap, "The 'Solution' is Now the 'Problem:' Wind Energy, Colonisation and the 'Genocide-Ecocide Nexus' in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Oaxaca," *The International Journal of Human Rights* 22, no. 4, (2018): 558.

the light of plural politics, and we should take account of the nexus. Even Arendt would likely agree, as she also sees the importance of both earthly and world living for the politics of human plurality. However, we have to question whether ecocide only matters when it leads to genocide of human co-inhabitants. Understanding from a biocultural lens allows us to recognize that neither coinhabitants nor habitats are merely a background for humanity; these are irreducible and irreplaceable components of not only human plurality but also biocultural plurality. Putting this into direct perspective, I would ask, shouldn't we also defend from and fight against ecocide for the sake of our numerous co-inhabitants and their/our habitats?[411]

For example, in the Buffalo War, the settlers (the U.S. Army and hunters) intentionally slaughtered bison (buffalo) as "a means of bringing the Indians under their control."[412] Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac explain the war as follows:

> In the southern plains, the Comanches and Kiowas has joined together to fight the bison hunters and the U.S. Army. They tried to save the bison and their fight was called the Buffalo War. But they were outnumbered. Between 1872 and 1874, 4 million bison were killed on the southern plains. Of that number, less that 5 percent were killed by Native North Americans. The white people of Texas saw what was happening and asked General Sheridan to end the slaughter of the bison. His reply was, 'Let them kill, skin and sell until the buffalo is exterminated.' It was the first deliberate act of ecocide in our history. By 1875 all the bison were gone from the southern plains.[413]

The fact the U.S. Army and the hunters knew that tribal people relied on bison for their livelihoods and committed the ecocide against the bison is a crime against humanity and can be

[411] For those defenders of human plurality, they may not see the point of protecting the earth in itself. My suggestion here is that through the lens of biocultural ethics we see the numerous interdependent relationships among every inhabitant of earthly habitats; the plurality of these relationships is what matters. In other words, the attempt to hierarchicalize the well-being of human inhabitants over that of other-than-humans fails to see these numerous interdependent relationships among every inhabitant of the earth. This corresponds to the debate about antianthropocentrism, particularly normative anthropocentrism, as discussed in Chapter 2.

[412] Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac, "The Passing of the Buffalo," in *Keepers of the Animals* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1997), p. 223.

[413] Caduto and Bruchac, "The Passing of the Buffalo," p. 225.

considered "as a final solution."[414] However, this ecocide of the bison itself is also heartbreaking. The ecocide of the bison does not merely mean a loss of sustenance for the people but also the loss of family members to the Comanche and Kiowa people. The Kiowa people's story of the Buffalo War unfolds:

> Once, not long ago, the buffalo were everywhere. Wherever the people were, there were the buffalo. They loved the people and the people loved the buffalo. When the people killed a buffalo, they did with reverence. They gave thanks to the buffalo's spirit. They used every part of the buffalo they killed . . . . Then the whites came . . . . They took the lands of the people. They built the railroad to cut the lands of the people in half. It made life hard for the people and so the buffalo fought the railroad. The buffalo tore up the railroad tracks. They chased away the cattle of the whites. The buffalo loved the people and tried to protect their way of life. So the army was sent to kill the buffalo. But even the soldiers could not hold the buffalo back. Then the army hired hunters. The hunters came and killed and killed. Soon the bones of the buffalo covered the land to the height of a tall man . . . ."[415]

In this excerpt of the Kiowa people's story, the bison fought back against the settlers to protect the Kiowa people. The bison are not depicted as passive beasts, but are active and caring members of the community. In this sense, this ecocide also means the mass murder of animal kin. The Kiowa people's story mourns and grieves the death of bison, not merely as a loss of the Kiowa ways of life but as a loss of the loved members of the community.

The resistance of the Oceti Sakowin and their allies, or Water Protectors as they call themselves, in the #NoDAPL movement at Standing Rock reminds us of this point about kinship. Water Protectors are not merely fighting against the corporate and colonial state violence to protect the Mini Sose, or the Missouri River, as a water resource. Craig Howe and Tyler Young note that the Lakota sense of relative includes all other-than-human beings and worlds, or the

[414] Caduto and Bruchac, "The Passing of the Buffalo," p. 223.

[415] Ibid.

earth, thus "Standing Rock is where the people gathered in 2016 to protect their relative."[416] Likewise, Nick Estes and Jaskiran Dhillion remind us that the Water Protectors recognize their kin relationship with water, as "the popular Lakotayapi assertion 'Mini Wiconi': water is life or more accurately, water is alive. You do not sell your relative, Water Protectors vow."[417] In this sense, as discussed earlier, the animacy of the world should be protected in itself; the Earth, water, land, and numerous other-than human species are not a background of humanity. Thus, ecocide should connote both as a crime against humanity and the Earth. Through using the term, crime against the Earth, I emphasize the point that the Earth is an integral part of the enabling and dynamic relations of *all* earthly inhabitants.

Again, this whole point should not be seen as a conflicting interest to the right of marginalized populations of humans.[418] We are all precarious and caught up in the web of interdependent relationships that includes other-than humans and the Earth. However, we need to recognize the unequal distribution of precarity (whose and what lives and ways of life are differentially protected by laws and institutions). As I explored through Butler, the question of which matters can be registered as political issues is never neutral nor equal, as Crook et al. say

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[416] Craig Howe and Tyler Young, "Mnisose," in *Standing with Standing Rock: Voices from the #NoDAPL Movement,* eds. Nick Estes and Jaskiran Dhillon (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), p. 59.

[417] Nick Estes and Jaskiran Dhillion, "Introduction: The Black Snake, #NoDAPL, and the Rise of a People's Movement," in *Standing with Standing Rock: Voices from the #NoDAPL Movement,* eds. Nick Estes and Jaskiran Dhillon (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), pp. 2–3.

[418] In her piece "Badass Indigenous Women Caretake Relations," Kim TallBear makes an important point here why the way of thinking that human life needs to be prioritized over other-than-human entities is problematic. She says that "I suspect that hierarchical Western binaries that assert human needs as a priority—as somehow not always already intimately entangled with the fate of other-than-human communities—also taints some Indigenous thinking. The culture/nature or human/animal divide misses the point of the Oceti Sakowin and their allies at Standing Rock identifying themselves as "Water Protectors." It is a fundamental misunderstanding of the core ethical framework that guides the Oceti Sakowin resistance to DAPL. The human beings gathered their stand with other-than-human relations—with the water, the land, and the many other nonhuman nations who reside within Oceti Sakowin historic lands—a place with which the Oceti Sakowin is coconstituted." See Kim TallBear, "Badass Indigenous Women Caretake Relations: #Standingrock, #Idlenomore, #Blacklivematter," in *Standing with Standing Rock: Voices from the #NoDAPL Movement,* eds. Nick Estes and Jaskiran Dhillon (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), pp. 16–17.

that "because the degree of attention paid to ecocide and genocide reflects the distribution and control of knowledge and power."[419] If there is some "human" job to do, then it is to broaden this narrow sphere of political space that prioritizes certain forms and ways of life over the others. When one million plant and animal species face a serious threat to extinction within a few decades,[420] the question concerning living with others in the time of ecological crisis cannot ignore genocide, ecocide, and geocide. Arendt's political philosophy of the love of the world needs to meet the love of the Earth for situated cohabitation.

[419] Crook, Short, and South, "Ecocide, Genocide, Capitalism, and Colonialism," p. 300.

[420] See IPBES, *Summary for Policymakers of the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*, eds. Sandra Díaz et al. (Bonn, Germany: IPBES secretariat, 2019), pp. 1–56.

# CHAPTER 5

# LIVING WITH OTHERS IN PRAXIS*

## 5.1 Introduction: From Arendt to Education

In the previous chapters, this dissertation has explored the meaning of living with others in the ecological crisis through a critical reading of Arendt along with Butler and Rozzi. In this chapter, I offer an example of situated cohabitation as a praxis: the Environmental Philosophy with Children (EPWC) summer camp project that was formed in 2019 in Texas. Before introducing the example in the following sections, I briefly address why education and children have something to do with situated cohabitation through conversation with and against Arendt.

In "The Crisis of Education," Arendt discusses the role of schooling in preparing the youth to take care of our common world. Her account of schooling is not about specific subjects or numbers of hours that children need to be at school. It is more about the teacher-and-student relationship, specifically the responsibility of adults to introduce the young to the world as it is.[421] For example, in Arendt's eyes, the desegregation of schools in the United States appeared to her as irresponsible act of adults toward children, because the children were left alone to figure out this racial turmoil by themselves, "burden[ing] children, black and white, with the working out of a problem which adults for generations have confessed themselves unable to solve."[422] After seeing a picture of a black girl, Elizabeth Eckford, being harassed by the angry white mob as a black student of the newly integrated school in Little Rock, Arkansas, Arendt

* This chapter, specifically the sections between 5.2 and 5.6, has been previously published, either in part or in full, from Rika Tsuji and Benn Johnson, "Philosophy Meets Place: Creating an Environmental Philosophy Summer Camp," in *Growing up with Philosophy Camp: How Learning to Think Develops Friendship, Community, and a Sense of Self*, ed. Claire Elise Katz, 99–109. (Lanham, Maryland, Rowman& Littlefield, 2020). This introduction, titled 'Introduction: From Arendt to Education," is added for this dissertation and is written solely by me.

[421] Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, with an introduction by Jerome Kohn (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), pp. 185–186.

[422] Hannah Arendt, "Reflections on Little Rock," *Dissent* 6, no. 1 (1959): 50.

wrote the piece "Reflections on Little Rock" (1959) to show her objection to the desegregation of school, critiquing adults for prematurely exposing children to politics.[423] For Arendt, adults should fulfill their responsibility to preserve childhood in the private realm and help introduce children into the world they are born into.[424]

Besides her concern for the premature exposure of children into politics, Arendt's objection to the desegregation of schools is also rooted in her understanding that school belongs to the social realm instead of the political realm. In her distinction, people in the social realm must have a right of free association, which allows people to choose whom they want to be with. In this sense, Arendt argues that the social realm is governed by the principle of discrimination; thus, she claims that the federal government should not interfere with whom the children want to attend school with.[425]

On one hand, I agree with Arendt that we, adults, have a responsibility toward children and should not deprive them of childhood. However, in the case of the desegregation of school, as anti-segregation advocates and activists saw, removing the segregated racial barriers that were making black children feel inferior was necessary to protect the health and dignity of black children.[426] In other words, the childhood of black children had been already hindered, or had been subjected to greater precarity, due to the racial segregation of the school. Although school can be a social space where children freely make choices to whom they would like to be friends with, school as an educational institution, without question, is more than social institution—it is a public institution where the value and practice of living with (unchosen) others is at stake.

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[423] Maribel Morey, "Reassessing Hannah Arendt's 'Reflections on Little Rock' (1959)," *Law, Culture, and the Humanities* 10, no. 1: 88–96.

[424] Hannah Arendt, "Reflections on Little Rock," p. 50; Morey, "Reassessing Hannah Arendt's 'Reflections on Little Rock' (1959)," pp. 90, 98–103, 106–10.

[425] Arendt, "Reflections on Little Rock," pp. 51–53..

[426] Morey, "Reassessing Hannah Arendt's 'Reflections on Little Rock' (1959)," pp. 91–92, 104 ,109.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the politics of plurality makes a normative demand: we cannot chose with whom we cohabit on the earth. If school serves an important role for situated cohabitation, then enforcing the regulatory customs and norms of racial segregation and any other social and political discrimination at schools is intolerable in light of a politics of plurality. As Butler says, the distribution of precarity is never equal, and education, without exception, is often part of this inequality.

For this reason, I disagree with Arendt's assumption that we adults can control when and how children are exposed to political turmoil. For example, as discussed in previous chapters, ecological crisis *is* a political issue by and large. Then, what does it mean to preserve childhood in this planetary home? Greta Thunberg, a sixteen-year-old Swedish student, has made her voice heard in the world through the school strike for climate crisis and criticized the inaction of adults at the UN Climate Action Summit in New York in 2019, saying "I should be back in school on the other side of the ocean . . . . How dare you! You have stolen my dreams and childhood with your empty words."[427] It may sound extreme, but the political inaction of adults, politicians, industries, and governments deprives children of a safe environment and planet where childhood can be secured. Our society has co-constituted the condition in which some children and youth have to act politically, as they come to be aware that there are no earth and world waiting for them to inhabit, despite the acknowledgement that this is not the primary job of childhood. Arguably, this is their performative concerted action, demanding that their lives, as well as the earth, are not disposable.[428] As educators, we cannot pretend that children are protected from

[427] "Transcript: Greta Thunberg's Speech At the U.N. Climate Action Summit," NPR online, September 23, 2019, https://www.npr.org/2019/09/23/763452863/transcript-greta-thunbergs-speech-at-the-u-n-climate-action-summit.

[428] Like the global climate strike in September 2019, the world-wide children's assemblies of School Strike for Climate have demanded for a livable earth and world for the people, and are a strong response to such injustice that has deemed certain populations as disposable. Of course, the children and the youth are not homogeneous; there are regional, economic, ethnic, racial, linguistic, and gender differences; there are varieties of reasons why they are

political issues; education and children are already politically entangled.[429]

Like everyone else, children also bring something unexpected to the world through their natality. For Arendt, this is another reason why education serves an important role for our worldly living. For Arendt, this somewhat raw natality of children can be a threat to the world if children are left to understand what our world is on their own. As discussed in Chapter 3, Arendt understands the duality of our living: earthly and worldly living. We are born on the earth and live in the world. In this sense, education plays an important role particularly for worldly living,[430] in that through education, we learn to live with others in the world, which proceeds and exceeds each of our arrival and departure.[431] Arendt explains:

> Thus the child, the subject of education, has for the educator a double aspect: he is new in a world that is strange to him and he is in process of becoming . . .; it corresponds to a double relationship, the relationship to the world on the one hand and to life on the other. The child shares the state of becoming with all living beings; in respect to life and its development . . . . But the child is new only in relation to a world that was there before him, that will continue after his death, and in which he is to spend his life. If the child were not a newcomer in this human world but simply a not yet finished living creature, education would be just a function of life and would need to consist in nothing save that concern for the sustenance of life and that training and practice in living that all animals assume in respect to their young."[432]

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joining together; and there are a variety of things they are demanding. For example, in New Zealand, one of the persistent chants was "we are not drowning, we're fighting." This chant reflects the experiences of people in the Pacific island and their allies. See, Jamie Tahana, "We're not Drowning, We're Fighting': Pacific Youth Lead Climate March," *Radio New Zealand*, September 27, 2019, https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/399785/we-re-not-drowning-we-re-fighting-pacific-youth-lead-climate-march. However, as we discussed in the previous chapter, Butler's performativity theory helps us understand that their concerted bodily actions enact a political space and demand for a more livable life and perhaps earth and world. For a report on the global climate strike, see Somini Sengupta, "Protesting Climate Change, Young People Take to Streets in a Global Strike," *New York Times*, September 20, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/20/climate/global-climate-strike.html.

[429] Rika Tsuji, "Revisiting the Community of Philosophical Inquiry through the Lens of Arendt and Butler," *Precollege Philosophy and Public Practice* 2 (Spring 2020): 10–11.

[430] Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, with an introduction by Jerome Kohn (New York, Penguin Books, 2006), pp. 182–86.

[431] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 182; Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind: The Groundbreaking Investigation on How We Think*, ed. Mary McCarthy (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 1981), p. 20.

[432] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 182.

That is, the world needs to be protected from the newcomers, children, while they are educated to live in the world. One of the reasons why Arendt wrote "the Crisis in Education," is that Arendt perceives our society either misunderstanding or neglecting this double relationship. She questions whether we, adults, are serious enough to take care of the world, the only home for our plurality. For Arendt, this caring should include the care of children who are new to the world. I consider, in this sense, that education is her way of loving care and praxis of living with others in the world. She elaborates as follows:

> Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token save it from that ruin which, except from renewal, except from the coming of the new and young, would be inevitable. And education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor to strike from their hands their chance of understanding something new, something unforeseen by us, but to prepare them in advances for the task of renewing a common world."[433]

Education, in this sense, is not a means of molding children into the expected ideals of the adults. Rather, education serves to help prepare children to take care of this world. However, as I discussed in the previous chapters, if we do not care for *both* earthly and worldly living—situated cohabitation then we are at risk of increasing more alienation from the earth and world, or what Rozzi would call biocultural homogenization. In this sense, I consider that learning to live with others in *place* is important. What follows, thus provides an educational example of how the love of the world can be combined with love of the earth through the theme of *place*, in order to bring about a more situated cohabitation.

## 5.2 Environmental Philosophy with Children Summer Camp

Five children crowd around a hole in the base of an oak tree, searching for two beady eyes that peer back at the children. One student, with hands and knees pressed to the grey dirt,

[433] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 193.

excitedly motions to the group and asks, “Should we take him out?”

One of the camp facilitators joins the conversation and queries, “Why do you think it is in there?”

“Maybe he’s afraid! We should leave him alone,” a child speaks.

Another child chimes in, “He could be our treasure! Let’s put him on the map!”

The children, excited about the little frog that they have found (and left alone), make bright red Xs in their notebooks to represent their new treasure.

Caring for others does not happen in a vacuum, nor does dialogue. Then how can the community of philosophical inquiry (CPI) encourage the specificity needed for care? This chapter attempts to show that place and environments are an integral part of learning to care for and engage in dialogue with the multitude of others with whom we share our communities. This chapter draws from the experiences of camp facilitators at an environmental philosophy with children (EPWC) summer camp and argues that “situated” inquiry can provide deep and immediate connection for children and facilitators and can be used to create more *caring*, critical, and creative communities.

### 5.2.1 Creation of an Environmental Philosophy Summer Camp

The inaugural EPWC summer camp (promoted as “Environmental Explorers Summer Camp”) was held from June 3 to 7, 2019, in North Texas, as a day camp that combined philosophical dialogue, art, and ecology, with the central theme of *place*.[434] The summer camp

[434] The EPWC summer camp was funded by the Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization (PLATO), the Onstead Institute, and the Department of Philosophy and Religion at the University of North Texas. The camp team sincerely appreciates the financial and institutional support from these institutions. We also would like to express deep gratitude to the rest of the camp facilitators—Shoshana McIntosh, Beatriz Galuban, T Wright, and Emily Hudson—for their hard work and care. We would like to extend our gratitude to our faculty team—Dr. Tyson Lewis, Dr. Tran Templeton, Dr. Chris Moffett, and Dr. Adam Briggle—for their strong support, including providing resources and supervision. The camp team greatly appreciates the collaborating institutions and their educators, Koan School, Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area (LLELA), and the Dallas Zoo for providing the camp

served twenty-four children, ages six through ten, with six university-student facilitators along with a small number of rotating on-site K–12 school teachers.[435] Led by university students, the summer camp was an interdisciplinary collaboration among philosophers, artists, environmental conservationists, and local K–12 educators.

The summer camp was developed from the ongoing project of EPWC at the University of North Texas (UNT).[436] The authors of this chapter,[437] along with help from the philosophy and religion department at UNT, began an exploratory expansion of Philosophy with Children (PwC) by integrating environmental philosophy with traditional PwC dialogues and named the project environmental philosophy with children (EPWC). In 2016, UNT students began weekly PwC/EPWC sessions with classes at a local nonprofit private school, which was looking to introduce philosophy to their students, ages four to eighteen years old.

In 2018, with increasing interest from the K–12 school and UNT students and faculty, the EPWC project decided to create the first EPWC summer camp. By recruiting camp staff within the university, the team became a highly interdisciplinary collaboration. It comprised art education students and environmental philosophy students, along with art education, early childhood education, and philosophy faculty. Drawing from each of the members' experiences, the team developed a five-day curriculum centered on "place," in general, and the North Texas region, in particular.

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with in-depth resources and educational opportunities. Last but not least, the camp was made possible through each of the camper's thoughtful participation and their parental support. We appreciate the chance to form a community of inquiry with these students.

[435] The camp employed three forms of groups: one big, two medium, and six small groups. Each small group had a group of four students and one facilitator. The camp divided the six small groups into two medium-sized groups based upon the campers' ages. The younger medium group consists of twelve students aged six to seven, and the older one consists of twelve students aged eight to ten. The camp had discussion activities mostly in the medium-sized groups.

[436] Per institutional review board (IRB; 19–289), all student names used in this chapter are pseudonyms.

[437] This original work is co-written by Rika Tsuji and Benn Johnson.

In Philosophy for Children (P4C) and/or PwC literature, the community of philosophical inquiry (CPI) is a central pedagogical practice in which children, along with a facilitator, are encouraged to think critically, creatively, and caringly through philosophical dialogue based upon a stimulus.[438] Inspired by the CPI, the camp aimed to provide a safe, educational space for local children to engage in their place critically, creatively, and caringly through philosophical, sensorial, and artistic activities.

Moreover, the camp drew from the p4c Hawai'i approach, which takes the caring aspect of the community of inquiry to be of utmost importance, signified in the program's emphasis on what it calls "intellectual safety." According to Thomas Jackson, founder of p4c Hawai'i, the community of inquiry requires that "new relationships place much more emphasis on listening, thoughtfulness, silence, care and respect for the thoughts of others" than in other educational environments.[439]

Likewise, environmental philosophers such as Val Plumwood and Karen Warren have long noted the importance of care as a means of countering the environmentally destructive and patriarchal tendencies of much of Western ethics. Thus, not only was care set as a precursor to productive critical discussion, but it was also an end in itself within the camp. Many of the activities in the camp both required care for each other and called students to consider the means and objects of their own care. Care can be both a value and practice for situated cohabitation, being accountable for our social and ecological conditions of our interdependency and precarious existence. Care was thus not relegated to a hidden curriculum but played an explicit role in the

[438] Matthew Lipman, Ann Margaret Sharp, and Frederick S Oscanyan, *Philosophy in the Classroom,* 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980); Matthew Lipman, *Thinking in Education*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Ann Margaret Sharp, "The Community of Inquiry: Education for Democracy," in *In Community of Inquiry with Ann Margaret Sharp: Childhood, Philosophy and Education,* eds. Maughn Rollins Gregory and Megan Jane Laverty, 241–50 (New York: Routledge, 2018).

[439] Thomas Jackson, "Gently Socratic Inquiry," p4c Hawai'i, 2017, accessed October 15, 2019, http://p4chawaii.org/wp-content/uploads/Gently-Socratic-NEW.pdf.

camp, lingering heavily on the tongues and ears of both campers and staff.

### 5.2.2 Creating a Place-Based Philosophy Summer Camp

Place-based education is not a new, progressive model of education. As David Gruenewald and Gregory Smith say, "All education prior to the invention of the common school was placed-based."[440] However, as discussed by Ricardo Rozzi in Chapter 4, standardized education tends to ignore the lived (biocultural) experiences of students, teachers, and communities altogether in the pursuit of uniformity of knowledge and learning. Such education pretends to be from nowhere or aims to be for nowhere. Donna Haraway argues, however, that the acknowledgment of partiality in knowledge and learning is necessary for us to be accountable to each other, claiming that "the only way to find a larger vision [about communities] is to be somewhere in particular."[441]

Thus, in the development of the summer camp curriculum, facilitators were encouraged to take account of their place from ecological, sociopolitical, and historical perspectives. By doing so, the unequal distribution of precarity in our place could be recognized in our curriculum. For example, given that 43.4 percent of students in Denton are economically disadvantaged, the camp decided to offer full scholarships to those students in need.[442] The theme of place also encouraged the camp team to reach out to local institutions. The summer camp collaborated with three different institutions: the local K–12 school, a natural conservation center, and a zoo.

The central venue of the camp was the K–12 school, which is located on a suburban farm

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[440] David A. Gruenewald and Gregory A. Smith, *Place-Based Education in the Global Age: Local Diversity* (New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2008), p. 1.

[441] Donna Haraway, "The Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 590.

[442] The percentage is as of October 11, 2019. See the detailed information about Denton ISD at https://schools.texastribune.org/districts/denton-isd/. The camp intended to offer eight need-based scholarships.

on the outskirts of Denton, Texas. The land on which Denton sits was formerly a mixture of blackland prairie and cross timber ecosystems, and it now represents an ever-expanding arm of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. The K–12 school is a partially developed plot, inhabited by grasses, mesquite and oak trees, various livestock (e.g., chickens, donkeys, and goats), sandboxes, playground equipment, and children.

To help the children engage with their place, the camp facilitators took the children to two off-site locations. Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area (LLELA) is a local nature preserve that attempts to preserve native ecosystems of cross timber forest and blackland prairie that were once destroyed due to the development of urban settlements. Researchers at LLELA attempt to understand what has been lost or put at risk (such as box turtles and bison).

The Dallas Zoo is an urban zoo, home to a diversity of mostly non-native species. Some of the animals at the zoo bring attention to their diminishing homeland habitats, making the key point that conservation is an urgent matter. At each site, the EPWC project tailored questions and lessons to those specific experiences so that campers could gain a more complex and dynamic sense of ecological community both in and out of North Texas.

## 5.3 Exploring Maps Critically, Creatively, and Caringly

To provide a coherent theme, it was decided that maps would be an ongoing element of the camp. Maps are philosophical and artistic ways of thinking about place, as they portray specific perspectives of one's world. However, they are not always historically neutral tools. For example, Hannah Arendt describes the accidental "shrinkage of the globe" through abstract and reductive modern mapping, which made possible a possessive attitude toward the Earth.[443] That is, maps reduce and *exclude* that which is considered extraneous, while including that which is

[443] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 1958, 2nd ed., with an introduction by Margaret Canovan (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 250.

useful to the user. This process of inclusion and exclusion risks overly abstracting place, turning it into mere space.

However, the same mapping process, when used critically, creatively, and caringly, can teach people about the places they care for (and don't care enough about) and help people situate their concerns and themselves in particular places. During the camp, students created texture maps of the cross timber forest, looked at ecologists' maps of native box turtles and a zookeepers' electronic map of elephants within their enclosures, and created conceptual maps of the various links they had noticed and forged during the camp.

At the beginning of the camp, the following question was posed: "What is a map for?" Next, campers were exposed to a variety of maps. The facilitators encouraged children to observe closely (including touching) the maps and explore what could be gleaned from them. Does this map describe what Texas is like? Can you find your own neighborhood on the map? What is missing in the map? Can everyone read this kind of map? The children shared their discoveries about the maps in the CPI. Some of them expressed that some maps oddly lack trees and animals.

Most of the maps in the world are anthropocentric. People see things from their human sensory perspectives, and it is very difficult, if not impossible, for them to experience, as Thomas Nagel argues, for example, what it is like to be a bat.[444] However, imagining nonhuman animals' perspectives and understanding the limits of such imagination can help to form a basis for practical care for others. In the end, we cannot completely inhabit other people's or nonhuman animals' perspectives; however, this does not mean that we cannot acknowledge and recognize the presence of other embodied perspectives and conditions. As seen through Butler in Chapter 4,

[444] Thomas Nagel, "What is it Like to Be a Bat?," *The Philosophical Review* 83, no. 4 (1974): 435–50.

such recognition for the precarity of others is a condition for the politics of plurality.

### 5.3.1 Painting Like a Turtle

Thus, at LLELA, the camp introduced an activity called "Paint Like a Turtle," in which children creatively explored how box turtles may experience their surroundings. They first learned about box turtles from a local conservationist and had a face-to-face encounter with young turtles that the conservationists were raising.

Then, they hiked through the rehabilitated habitats to imagine places that the turtles may inhabit, what they eat, and what they see and enjoy while collecting (caringly) some materials from the trails for later projects. Along the trail, children stopped to draw and paint with watercolor pencils, given the task to imagine what it might be like to see from the turtle's perspective. Some children painted only things that reside near the forest floor, while another spread forest soil on the paper.

On the following day, the children reflected on their experience at LLELA and created texture maps using materials collected from the trail. Some of the children insisted on the importance of including soil and fallen leaves and grasses so that the box turtles can hide themselves from possible predators. The texture maps created by the children seemed to highlight the thoughtfulness of children toward their nonhuman co-inhabitants.

Later in the day, the camp shared a children's book called *Melvin and the Boy*,[445] in which a boy brought a turtle, named Melvin, home from a pond because he wanted a pet. In the story, the boy realized that Melvin seemed unhappy, even though the boy provided the best care that he could. A facilitator paused the story there to ask the students what the boy should do next in the story.

[445] Lauren Castillo, *Melvin and the Boy* (New York: Henry Holt and Company LLC, 2011).

Tonks, a nine-year-old camper, commented that the boy in the story should make more effort to ensure the turtle's comfort, such as by including water in the turtle's enclosure, suggesting the importance of replicating the turtle's original habitat. Aspen, nine years old, responded, "I think the boy should release the turtle into the wild," pointing out that the reaction of the turtle in the story suggests the turtle does not like the new home. Tonks pointed out that the release spot has to be the exact place the boy found the turtle. A facilitator asked, "Why does it have to be the exact place?" Scarlet, nine years old, responded that "the turtle may also have a family such as babies to take care of."

The facilitator asked, "Have you collected things from trails and school backyards so far in this camp?" Most of the students nodded. The facilitator continued, "Should we return things that we collected back to where we found them? Is our collecting activity caring? Is it different from collecting turtles?" Rachael, eight years old, suggested that the things the children collected were not alive, so it was fine to collect them, but people should not collect living things. Tonks responded that "If a bark has some fungi, and if there are many left, you can take some." She also specified that "If it is a rock, then you need to make sure there is nothing living under it. Then, you can take it." The community was able to inquire through their shared firsthand experience of collecting materials.

Through attempting to see and inquire through the lens of their reptilian neighbors, the community of inquiry connected the materiality of the turtle with its unique perspective. Imagining another's perspective requires one to take account of the other's material conditions, such as habitat, body, and relations with others. By doing so, we can also realize the vulnerability of our ecosystems.

## 5.4 Bison: Placing the Past

Bison were a normal part of much of the North Texas landscape before European colonization. Due to mass killings of the bison, particularly in the early 1870s, however, most children cannot see bison unless they visit special places such as natural reserve areas, where bison have been reintroduced. Thus, it can be difficult to imagine how the landscapes one currently resides in have been changed by forces such as colonialism. Bison were, for a long time, an integral aspect of the North Texas region, and they played a vital role in the daily lives of the tribes that made this place home.

Unfortunately, the camp could not show the children bison firsthand but instead showed a brief video of bison that currently inhabit Caprock Canyon, a state park in the panhandle of Texas. After watching the video, children were asked to sketch the animals in the video. In the same morning, the camp had focused on the embodiment of animals and close observation through sketching and trying to move like the various farm animals that lived in the K–12 school.

After sketching bison, the camp introduced a Kiowa story called "The Passing of the Buffalo"[446] to groups of students. Following the tradition of Native Americans' oral storytelling suggested by the book, a facilitator memorized the story beforehand and shared the story of the Kiowa people.

As opposed to a predominant colonial version of the story in which buffalo were killed by the whites to free space for westward expansion, the story of the Kiowa people shares that buffalo were family members of the tribe and that the Kiowa people used to honor the spirit of the buffalo, during and after hunting, by using every part of the body. In this telling of the story, colonists built trains to separate the native peoples from each other, so the bison fought against

[446] Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac, "The Passing of the Buffalo," in Keepers of the Animals, 223–44, (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1997).

the trains and the army due to the buffalo's love for the people. This telling of the story portrays bison as co-inhabitants of the plains that mutually care for the Kiowa people, contrary to much contemporary perception of nonhuman animals as lumbering, passive beasts.

The story gave birth to a CPI dialogue overlooking a grassy pasture, currently absent of large mammals. Robert, seven years old, questioned: "If I have ancestors that were in the army, and the army killed the buffalo in order to get rid of the Native Americans, does that mean my family were the bad guys?" Harold, ten years old, commented that the buffalo did not go to heaven after they died, suggesting that the buffalo went to hell, doomed by the colonists' violent crimes. A facilitator questioned, "Why is using the whole body of the buffalo caring?" Some students reflected over how they would feel if they were killed but left to waste or killed but appreciated through being used.

After the discussions, the camp shared a digital map "Native Land,"[447] which shows changes in territories, language boundaries in North America before and after the signing of treaties between native peoples and colonial powers such as the United States. As opposed to United States maps that show clear, usually geometric boundaries between states, as some students commented, the Native Land map includes many overlapping territories across different tribes. Tonks suggested that overlapping territories, as opposed to clear-cut U.S. states, may indicate that the different tribes might have been more willing to share things like food and water.

Critical in this set of activities was the recognition that places are not simply spaces—they have historical, political, and moral significance for many inhabitants, past and present. Through these exercises, the community of inquiry was able to expand its notion of what it means to care, the importance of the ways in which we are connected to land, and the uncanny

[447] The map can be accessed online at https://native-land.ca/ as of October 12, 2019. Please read further instructions for the use of the map at the site, where it is discussed in detail.

presences and absences felt when we inhabit particular places.

## 5.5 Unexpected Unfoldings

So far, this chapter has shared a few examples of planned activities during the camp. Educators spend significant time planning and theorizing in order to ensure that educational experiences are meaningful for all who are involved. However, in the actual camp setting, educational experiences are transformed from hypothetical curriculum to real interactions, and in these transformations, the actual experiences may completely change from the educator's intentions.

When hiking through the nature reserve, poison ivy became an unexpected highlight of the trip. After introducing poison ivy for the sake of keeping students safe, poison ivy was quickly transformed into a game; for example, we asked, "How many poison ivy plants can we spot on the trail?" Throughout the remaining days of camp, poison ivy became a common occurrence in student sketches and group discussions.

Likewise, after hiking, some students and facilitators were bitten by chiggers, a common red mite that produces itchy, swollen welts. Although some of the students and faculty were previously unaware of these little insects, they served as a reminder that we are part of the food chain and as an exercise in patience (listening to peers can be very difficult when a student feels overwhelmed by itchiness). This experience also encouraged our community of inquiry to consider ways of coexisting with these insects without suffering their burning bites. As discussed through Butler and Rozzi in Chapter 4, this coinhabitation with "others" should always be subject to open inquiry; we must ask who/what are included and excluded from our field of recognition.

Toward the end of the trip to the Dallas Zoo, the group was walking toward the exit of

the zoo, through an underground tunnel that had been transformed into a gallery of larger-than-life images of various threatened and endangered species. This was not a planned "activity"; the camp staff was actually trying to leave the park quickly to arrive home in time for parent pick-up. Sophie, six years old, noticed that there was text next to each of the images and was struggling to read it. A camp facilitator that was nearby helped explain the text.

"It says that they're endangered or threatened, kind of like the bison that we talked about." Sophie sighed thoughtfully. Just then, the group passed a similar image of a cheetah. Sophie gasped.

"I love cheetahs! Are they going to be almost extinct, too?"

"I'm not sure, but there are not a lot of them left."

"Why not?"

What ensued during the walk was a meandering discussion between facilitator and student about human encroachment, climate change, and whether people in Denton were responsible for the endangerment of cheetahs. The student had previously mentioned that her grandmother lives in Africa and was particularly concerned with the connection between her own ways of living and the plight of a species that lives far from herself. While the subject of discussion was a non-native animal, the dialogue was situated in the actual relationships of the community and stemmed from the serendipity of location (i.e., stumbling across a provocative photograph in the middle of a zoo).

In many cases during the camp, the spontaneous events led to shared memories of the place, as well as strengthened bonds between community members themselves. Although physical and intellectual safety are primary concerns, camp staff cannot entirely control or predict the educational environment or children (especially when outside of a classroom).

Although this can be challenging, certain unpredictability may afford a wealth of opportunity for a community of inquiry. As Arendt says, we cannot predict how we will be perceived by or impact others. Like everyone else, children bring this natality, ability to initiate anew, to the world. The natality of children is not necessarily all destructive, like Arendt is concerned of. It can be caring. By encouraging openness to some of this unpredictability, the place itself can become a participant to which the community must listen carefully in dialogue.

## 5.6 Conclusion

The reflections in this chapter represent only a few key experiences and not a complete picture of the summer camp. Furthermore, the argumentation is not intended to create a universal notion of how philosophy education or summer camps should be practiced. However, through sharing these experiences, the authors hope to encourage educators to consider place as an integral part of planning and practicing philosophy camp. Moreover, collaboration with other disciplines and institutions allows for an expansion of the ways in which the community engages, inquires, and expresses itself critically, creatively, and caringly in place. Through such situated inquiry and activities, students and educators can come to build caring communities that are much needed within the politics of plurality.

## 5.7 Dissertational Conclusion

Compared to the earlier chapters, this chapter may appear to be less theoretical, as it mostly reflects on the summer camp project where I (and Johnson and other camp facilitators) had many dialogues with our campers. However, as briefly mentioned in Chapter 1, my journey for this dissertation started from my dialogue with a student in Massachusetts who shared his concern of the earth becoming uninhabitable. Ending my dissertation with this chapter where our campers' voices and thoughts are shared, thus, makes a lot of sense to me (hopefully to my

readers). As Arendt says, children's natality, their ability to bring something new, is powerful. However, the summer camp example suggests that one way of serving our (adults'/educators') responsibility is to help them know that their natality can be caring. As discussed in Chapter 2, ecological crisis consists of many forms of struggles, and some of these struggles may derive from the abstraction of place/land into a space, or earth alienation as Arendt describes it. My response to this, in this sense, is that introducing the newcomers to a place and sharing the ways in which we can care for our common place is both valuable and a praxis for situated cohabitation.

Of course, this work is limited in many ways. However, as Arendt and others told us, the acceptance of limitedness, or partiality is important for my work to be accountable in the world of plurality. Conversing with Arendt has taught me her tremendous care for the world we share, and I would like to extend this care to the earth that we are always already bounded to.

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